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Sir George Arthur, Bart., M.V.O., soldier and writer, served in the Egyptian campaign of 1880-1886, and through the Boer War. During the Great War he was Private Secretary to Lord Kitchener, until the latter's death after which he served with the Intelligence Department in France. His books include the famous *Story of the Household Cavalry*; and the biographies of Queen Alexandra, Queen Mary, Lord Kitchener, Lord Wolseley, Lord Haig, and General Sir John Maxwell. His autobiography *Not Worth Reading* was published in 1938. Sir George is a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour; a Member of the Order of the Crown of Belgium; and he holds the Chesney Gold Medal.

CONCERNING
WINSTON SPENCER
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BY

SIR GEORGE ARTHUR



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PREFACE

“Does the road wind up hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Does the day's journey take the whole long
day?

From morn till night, my friend.”

—*Christina Rossetti.*

THIS little volume has no claim to literary merit, inside information or even to chronological exactitude; it merely represents a rough attempt to recall some of the incidents which have crowded a life spent, almost without a break, in the public service, the life of a faithful servant of the Crown on whom just now the eyes of Europe are fixed. From the days of his boyhood, one clear vision seems to have inspired Winston Spencer Churchill, one steady purpose—to save his country in her hour of peril—to have drawn him on; so day in, day out he has made every faculty the pliant instrument of a resolute will. In the long apprenticeship he has served for the office he now holds, he has spared nothing, shirked nothing, shrank from nothing; there has been

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no looking back and very little going aside to rest; no triumph has unduly elated him, no reverse has daunted him nor at any point has he thought of securing the laurels without kicking up some of the dust. "*Aut Cæsar aut Nullus*" has been a motto wholly inappropriate; it was at one time just possible that he might not rise to the status of a Cæsar, it was always unthinkable that he would ever sink to the level of a Nullus.

Nor is it quite easy to find in the pages of history his exact parallel; a man equally powerful in spoken word as in decisive act; great soldiers have often been inarticulate, great statesmen have sometimes left but little trace of their sometime fame. An able soldier before he began to occupy his business in the deeper waters of statecraft, no one will ever deny Mr. Churchill his pinnacle as a great speaker.

We have been told on high authority that the finest speech ever delivered in the House of Lords was the pronouncement of Lord Halifax¹—some two and a half centuries ago—on the Exclusion Bill; beside it pales the modern oratory of the 8th Duke of Argyll, of Rosebery and Curzon: so it is possible to think that for sheer ability to unfold in precisely the

¹George Savile, Marquis of Halifax.

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right words and in precisely the right temper what an occasion requires or suggests, Pulteney¹ and Pitt,² Burke³ and Bright⁴ would find in the Prime Minister of to-day their rival if not their master.

“All your history,” wrote a great Pro-consul, “points to men who have spent themselves in the service of their country, and to whom full justice has not been done until long after they themselves have passed away.” Glittering successes have studded a progress which has been largely made within public gaze, and has never failed to excite eager interest; yet it is on his own evidence that a great public servant who to-day has all the world for his audience will be more than willing to accept all posterity for his critic.

¹William Pulteney, Earl of Bath, 1684-1767.

²Earl of Chatham.

³Right Hon. E. Burke, 1729-1797.

⁴Right Hon. John Bright, 1811-1889.

I

HE was always disposed—and for the most part rightly disposed—to take time by the forelock, and his entry into the world took place a week or two before it was expected. Dame Nature, however, was then as friendly to him as Dame Fortune has been ever since and on November 30th, 1874, in the great drawing-room at Blenheim the Duchess of Marlborough, popularly known as “Fanny by the Grace of God,” could exultantly pronounce her new grandson to be a perfectly formed baby.

Winston Churchill’s career has been so dazzling, his rise to pre-eminence so justified, that he has long since thrown into shadow the brilliant, but all too brief, record of his father, the “Lord Randolph” whose name through over a dozen years rose to every lip when any leading event, social, sporting, or political, was under discussion.

It is a commonplace that a son is more than likely to take after his mother and here certainly the majestic morgue of the Churchills has been a good deal more than tempered by the breezy Bohemianism of the Jeromes. Lady

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Randolph Churchill was the daughter of an American gentleman who was at once an ardent Federalist and the owner of newspapers and race-horses; he was also a man who knew his own mind, and his mind was set against his "Jenny's" engagement even to the son of a Duke unless the Duke were willing to welcome an American daughter-in-law with open arms and to "meet him" in the all-important matter of suitable marriage settlements. Be it remembered that Miss Jerome was the earliest—as one of the most attractive—of feminine American invaders; she paved the way for immediate followers: Consuelo Duchess of Manchester, Lady Carington, Lady Page, the precursors of a long, but later, line of brides from across the Atlantic, whose good looks were for the most part matched by their solid fortunes.

There lie in the writer's recollections of Cowes Regatta some sixty years ago a trio, two of whom hailed from the United States and one from France: Mrs. Sandys, Mrs. Standish and Lady Randolph Churchill, who were known as the pink, the white and the black pearls. Of these Lady Randolph was by far the most gifted; she was a musician in her soul as well as to her finger-tips. She quickly versed herself in the intricacies of English politics, she read

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widely, and her powers of conversation—conversation flavoured by a wit which left no wound—might have excited the envy even of Mlle. de L'Espinasse.

The son was some way from the threshold of public life when his father, sorely stricken in health, perforce retired from it, to conclude a meteoric career in mental cloud and mortal sickness; the mother survived her husband for some twenty-five years, and although she never intruded either into the political or the domestic circumstances of her son she was far too vital and colourful a person to be altogether lacking in influence over the soldier statesman who was as the very apple of her eye.

The two first years of married life were for the “Randolphs” roses and wine all the way, except for an occasional pinching of the financial shoe. There was hunting and yachting and racing, there were frequent dinners at which Disraeli, Gladstone and Rosebery would be guests, all the “great houses” opened their doors, Goodwood and Trouville followed on Ascot and Newmarket, and the member for Woodstock allowed his Parliamentary duties to sit lightly on him. There were visits to Paris of which Winston, later on, eagerly learned the details; acquaintance was made with such luminaries as Breteuil, Du Lau, Alphonse

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Daudet, Alphonse Rothschild and Léon Gambetta; the last had finally established his "République Française," and a splendid adventurer's audacious skill had, even before her marriage, won the fervent admiration of Lady Randolph.

But in 1876 there fell a shadow to which Winston would refer as having both darkened and strengthened his father's life, a shadow which was never wholly banished from his own memory.

The Prince of Wales, who had been on happiest terms of friendship with the "Randolphs," took as one of his companions for his Indian tour another intimate in the jovial person of Lord Aylesford. Actuated presumably by some sudden evil impulse the then Lord Blandford took an opportunity to forsake his own much enduring wife—incidentally the "Lady Corisande" of Disraeli's "Lothair"—and to elope with Lady Aylesford.

The Prince of Wales was outspoken in wrath against what he considered as an act of combined treachery and infidelity. Lord Randolph hotly espoused his brother's cause and found the gates of Marlborough House closed to him and frowns on many of the faces of the so-called "Marlborough House set."

The breach was complete and lasted for

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eight years, when a complete and general reconciliation was effected. But later on Queen Victoria's pen was to be busy in warnings to her eldest son against association with "a man devoid of all principle who holds the most insular and dangerous doctrines on foreign affairs, who is impulsive and utterly unreliable."

A ten-year-old boy was made aware that the Sovereign's diatribes caused his parents but little emotion.¹ The Queen had been "upset" by Lord Randolph's protest when she communicated directly with the Viceroy on a matter affecting the then Duke of Connaught's military command; she was sure that Lord Randolph's visit to St. Petersburg was fraught with intrigue, because he had been the bearer of a letter from the Princess of Wales to her sister the Empress Marie, and Winston was probably reminded that his father's major offence was that in December, 1886, he had handed in to Lord Salisbury his portfolio for India and acquainted *The Times* of the fact without informing his Sovereign; worse still, that he had dared to write his letter of resignation

¹ Lord and Lady Randolph Churchill and Lord Bridport to dinner: we remained talking in the corridor till half-past ten. Lady Randolph (an American) is very handsome and very dark. He said some strange things to me (from Queen Victoria's Journal, 8th November, 1886).

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on black-edged Windsor Castle note-paper.

In those spacious days it was not unusual in "great families" for the care and instruction of the children to rest but indirectly with the parents; Winston's nurse taught him the alphabet; the animal called "Governess"—as Dickens alluded to that often unhappy and ill-equipped functionary—launched him into a losing struggle with "sums." The boy's inability to cope with arithmetic was of a piece with his father's entire, and admitted, ignorance of decimals: Lord Randolph's first acquaintance with "those d—d dots" was formed when, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had to balance the yearly Budget.

Victorian methods again prevailed, and at the tender age of seven a term was set to feminine dominion and there was an odious cra of private school, an institution now known as "prep." It is not easy to understand why the boys of the "upper classes" should have been subjected when little more than babies to a sudden severance of home ties, a calamity which the circumstances of poorer folk forbade. Winston was no doubt a "troublesome boy," and the writer can remember him as such some six years later when cruising on the *Osborne*. But frankness and kindness were ingrained and were proof even against three years' experience

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in an establishment where Dr. Blimber's forcing methods were observed but reinforced by a spice of Sadism wholly absent from the system to which Paul Dombey was subjected. But the physical health of a highly strung boy suffered, and there was to be a transfer to a school at Brighton, where kindlier measures were employed and more especially where medical supervision could be exercised by a doctor who had shot up into fame largely on the reputation of having successfully "attended" Lord Randolph. One of Ouida's Guardsmen "made a prima donna with a single brava"; it is not too much to say that Lord Randolph "made" Dr. Robson Roose with a recovery from a single illness. Roose combined a perfect bedside manner with definite social ambitions; he would invite his more distinguished patients to dinner, an invitation usually accepted partly because the doctor kept an excellent cook; partly because restoration to health was thereby likely to be the more complete.

Roose may have been somewhat discredited by the orthodox lights of the medical profession but he certainly did much to build up the constitution of a prospective Prime minister, and a rather puny private school pupil had developed into a sturdy twelve-year-old public

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schoolboy when Harrow, in preference to Eton, was selected for his future training.

At Harrow on the Hill he very quickly came under the direct notice of that champion of muscular Christianity, whose shoulders were nearly as broad as his Church views, Dr. Welldon.

The Master quickly recognised that the boy was at his very best when general knowledge was being tested and expanded, at his very worst in "exams," where the dry-as-dust tutor so largely enjoys himself. It is a pathetic fact that the gallant and resourceful defender of Rorke's Drift had recently been "spun" in his papers for promotion, so it is quite possible to think that the brilliant and deadly accurate biographer of Marlborough might have been puzzled to answer questions which would offer no difficulty to a Corporal sitting for a second Class Certificate. If Harrow did not result in any salient scholastic distinctions the Harrovian imbibed—together with a complete mastery of English prose—the precious lesson of *how* to learn; in the after crowded years the *what* to learn was thereby rendered clear and comprehensive.

One happening was to be lodged in his memory: standing at the edge of a deep swimming pool a junior boy mistook a towelled,

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stocky figure for a contemporary and playfully pushed him into the water. Revenge might have taken a far worse shape than the ducking which followed; the individual on whom the innocent practical joke had been playcd was the pocket Hercules to whom some fifty-six years later a Premier was to hand the portfolio for Indian affairs.

Not long ago there was unfolded to us the story of a statesman whose baby hands seemed to clutch at celebrity from the cradle; so remarkable were his childish pronouncements, so clearly expressed his boyish ambitions, so successful his youthful achievements, that his biographer filled some seventy pages of print before launching his subject on his adult career. Something like the converse applied to Winston Churchill; the sequence of nursery schoolroom and private school were almost barren of incident, the three years spent at Harrow, except for carrying off the Public Schools Fencing Championship, were devoid of distinction, if to the close observer full of promise. The long apprenticeship was distasteful to the apprentice who was impatient to servc his articlcs and get down to the business of life. So in after life the entire reluctance to "look on," the burning desire to be up and doing, have been, year in year out, the measure

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of a positively amazing capacity and voracious appetite for work.

Whether or no an impetuous boy is helped or handicapped by a brilliant parent is an open question; anyhow, Winston would review as one of his happiest milestones the day when his status as a military cadet entitled him to go about with Lord Randolph who, despite untimely failing health, had no wish to renounce mundane pleasures. Filial duty and sincere affection may have conspired to prevent a biographer from suggesting that the slightest puff of cloud ever arose between a rather "difficult" parent and his eldest son; but those of us who have winced under the lash of Lord Randolph's caustic tongue may feel sure that both sons realised that it behoved them to "keep their place."

No descendant could aspire to emulate the deeds of England's greatest General, but the Second Duke of Marlborough had greatly distinguished himself when leading a Brigade of Guards at the battle of Dettingen; thereafter the Churchill-cum-Spencer military spirit seems to have evaporated, although the Eighth Duke—perhaps the most agreeable and amoral man within one's experience—served for a year or two rather languidly in the Blues. Possibly one of the lessons which Winston learned—or

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taught himself at school—was that for one person who knows that Godolphin was chief minister in 1708 and Lord Liverpool Premier in 1815, a million folk will tell you that Marlborough and Wellington were victorious at Blenheim and Waterloo. History is, of course, liable to reverse herself and it is quite thinkable that when the din of war is over and its dust cleared away, when Weygand and Goering and even the gallant Gort are forgotten, there will cling to memory the name of the Minister who envisaged the great emprise of his career in an hour when his country's safety, honour and welfare were at stake.

But Winston's military—no less than his political—career suffered an initial check. Just as he failed to secure the suffrages of Oldham when he first sought his way to Parliament, so was he twice turned back from Sandhurst, and it was only after a severe course of "cramming" that the doors of the Military College were opened to him.

One Captain James and his partners enjoyed a reputation for an almost uncanny knowledge of what questions examiners were likely to set; no pupil was so dense that these astute specialists could not steer him past Civil Service Commissioners, however anxious these inquisitors might be to puzzle a candidate

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writhing in their grasp. The James methods, reinforced by the mental alertness, and aplomb of their pupil, easily gained the day and the coveted commission in the Cavalry seemed to be within sight.

Winston's débüt at Sandhurst nearly synchronised with Lord Wolseley's departure from the War Office to assume the Command in Ireland. But the doctrine which an arch-reformer had—in the teeth of no little opposition—preached ex cathedra, had long since found ready and general response; military history had ceased to be a closed book, strategy and tactics were no longer regarded as unsuitable subjects for the ante-room or the mess room, reconnaissance work was now no mere excrescence on a field day, and Staff College itself had become a goal well worth winning—this last despite the pronouncement of a septuagenarian Commander-in-Chief that “Staff officers are very ugly officers and sometimes very dirty officers.” Perhaps unconsciously, but anyhow certainly, a Sandhurst cadet set himself and schooled himself to be a keen and efficient disciple of the man who constantly affirmed that a soldier's true métier is to fight and his true training is how to fill his place at the front.

What was wrong with the officers was due to

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their circumstances far less than themselves. It was not their fault that since Waterloo they had been dressed like expensive dolls and had been given little to do and less encouragement even to do that little. They had an idea that the Cavalry were superior to the Infantry, that the Artillery was a sanctum into which they need not pry, while the Royal Engineers were regarded much as a dapper Oppidan at Eton looked at a talented but rather badly groomed Scholar.

The cadet took an immediate header into Tactics, Fortification, Map-making and Military Law; he studied Military History even in its drier forms; with heart as well as hand he helped to dig trenches—although static warfare was not within immediate contemplation—to construct breastworks and rivet parapets; he drew contoured maps and set out picket lines; in a word, he was initiated into all the lore of soldiering except, of course, the use of bombs and hand grenades; surely, so the pundits argued, these would be no use in modern warfare.

For an embryo cavalry officer the riding school was a theatre of special interest and—despite the frequency and violence with which the rider might part from his horse—an occasion of keen enjoyment; the Sandhurst curriculum

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was supplemented by special instruction from the riding master (the "equitation officer" had not yet been instituted) of the Blues, and finally rounded off by the "real thing" in a regimental establishment.

But just now there was gathering a cloud which was not to be dispersed; to those close to him it was clear that a term would soon be set to the grey evening of Lord Randolph's sunny morning and noon. He retained sufficient strength to drag his tired body to South Africa, and on part of a projected world tour; but the once fiery orator on whose words packed audiences would hang and whose every utterance would be cheered to the echo was daily becoming more and more tongue-tied; the brain would no longer do its full duty, the face was eloquent of pain and the figure of fatigue; the daring statesman who seemed but lately to have reached the apogee of his career, and who but a year or two ago seemed so debonair and youthful in appearance, was now in body and mind something akin to a noble wreck. All this Winston watched with deep concern, sharing to the full his mother's anxious vigil. Perhaps he had been just a little afraid of a father who had dared to enter the lists against Mr. Gladstone, who had haughtily deposed the appointed leader of the House of Commons and, with

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marked ability, had led it himself; but it was the sort of delicious fear which need not, and does not, cast out love.

When the end came Lord Randolph had been for some weeks in the Grosvenor Square house of the Dowager Duchess, the mother in whose eyes he could do no wrong. Early on a January morning in 1895 Winston hurried through the snow to watch his father's life flicker out with no pain or struggle; consciousness had been fitful for some days, but returning almost at the last to put to his son an exactly opportune question: "Have you got your horses?"

A boyish dream was to come true, in March 1895, when Winston was gazetted to the Fourth Hussars, a unit which if it did not quite rank with the Tenth Hussars or Twelfth Lancers—and was of course several paces behind the Household Cavalry—could fairly be entitled a "crack Corps."

The Fourth were then commanded by one Colonel Brabazon, familiarly known as "Bwab"; this very gallant officer had been the most exquisite of dandies in the Guards. "The Guards," he lamented to the present writer towards the close of his life, "don't dwess nowadays, at least not what I call dwess." He himself was never seen in London in other than

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tall hat and frock-coat and even when *en tête-à-tête* with his sister would always don tail coat and white tie for dinner. "Bwab" highly approved the Prince of Wales's mild reproach to a young Guardsman who appeared at the Marlborough Club in a dinner jacket. "I suppose, my young friend, you are going to a fancy dress ball." Financial difficulties had caused "Bwab" to make a hurried exit from the Household Troops; then as a volunteer under Sir Garnet Wolseley in Ashanti he had so distinguished himself that the Prince of Wales procured for him a commission in his own regiment, the Tenth Hussars, and paid for his outfit. A staunch friend of Lord Randolph, even when other friends looked the other way, he had served in India through the Afghan War, at Suakin and in the Nile Expedition. He was as ready with riposte as with his sword and when the Heir Apparent sarcastically congratulated him on having, under Sir Evelyn Wood's orders, removed his cherished "Imperial", replied: "If it comes to that, Sir, I don't know that the beard is appropriate to a Hussar; why not shave it off and wear your hair *en brosse* like me?" No wonder that this glittering, clanking, bemedalled and warm-hearted Colonel gained Winston's admiration and affection and that he exercised over him

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an influence which lasted beyond soldiering days.

When the Fourth Hussars were about to embark for India, Brabazon, whose period of command was about to finish, tried to extract a promise from Winston that he would not send in his papers, anyhow until he had obtained his troop. "You are full of talent and you should go very far," he urged. "What you need is discipline." Winston declined to give the specific promise but undertook to remain until his Regiment had won the inter-Regimental Polo Cup. The Colonel was satisfied; he had surely gained his point as a Regiment scarcely ever gained that distinction until after full four years service in India. But the unusual happened; within three years the team of the Fourth, of which Winston was a conspicuous member, carried off the trophy and a subaltern having kept his word to his father's friend, could set his face towards England.

Meanwhile, life had been full of colour and good cheer. Regimental training, if not so scientific as to-day, was fairly strenuous and the Riding School was a fiery ordeal, especially when presided over by a somewhat tyrannical instructor whose object it was to score superiority in horsemanship over other regiments. The trooper was said to be an adept in

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letting loose a string of explosive adjectives without any accompanying substantive; the N.C.O. would anyhow formulate his reproaches in phrase. Sometimes recruits would be stimulated by rather ungracious comparisons. "Don't sit your horse," the Rough Riding Corporal Major of the 2nd Life Guards would adjure a pupil, "as if you were a sack of potatoes or a b——y 1st Lifeguardsman." It took, however, but very little time and pains to turn out Winston as an efficient Cavalry officer; from boyhood onwards he was always a bold and strong rider even if his contours caused him, at a later period, to be somewhat clumsy in appearance as a horseman; although—unlike his father—he never inclined towards the race-course, horses were never a weariness, always a delight, to him.

But manœuvres and musketry, galloping field days and Royal inspections—even when Queen Victoria sat in her carriage at the saluting point—were insufficient fare for an eager and rather restless subaltern whose mind was bent on seeing a shot fired in anger; one wonders how many shots fired in righteous anger, or in bitter hate, he was to see in the years to come. There came an opportunity and Winston Churchill has seldom, if ever, been known to miss one. The island of Cuba was in

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revolt and the famous Marshal Campo was hurrying, and harrying, 80,000 Spaniards to quell it. There should be plenty of fizz and a good deal of fun and Winston agreed with a fellow subaltern, Reginald Barnes—brother to the greatly gifted Vanbrugh sisters—that they must not be out of it. The Colonel was quite in favour of junior officers gaining professional experience in the theatre of war; the authorities, on the other hand, were disposed to regard this sort of thing as “very irregular,” which, as a matter of fact, it was. Herbert Kitchener, when midway between cadetship and commission, had attached himself to General Chancy’s army of the Loire and had been severely admonished for his pains; the “Ride to Khiva” Burnaby, when serving in the Blues, had made a solo flight in a balloon which drifted across the Channel and plumped down in Normandy; the occupant was sharply reprimanded for “visiting a foreign country without leave.” Winston tactfully made known his desire to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff,¹ then our Ambassador in Madrid, a diplomat to his fingers’ ends, and sometime a member of that “fourth party” of which Lord Randolph had

¹ Son of the famous Dr. Wolff who when he proposed for the hand of the daughter of Lord Orford said: “I come of the blood of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” “Oh,” said Lord Orford, “you can take her but I fear our family can offer you nothing like that.”

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been the leading spirit. Sir Henry had known Winston from babyhood; he himself was as well known to the Sultan of Turkey, the Emperor of Russia, and the Shah of Persia (from whom, incidentally, he had wrung an important banking concession) as he was now *persona gratissima* to Queen Maria Cristina. It was mere child's play for an Ambassador to secure undeniable letters of introduction to the Spanish Captain General, and before the end of November the two Hussars had set foot in Havana, consumed an enormous number of oranges, smoked a great many large cigars (one staggers to think of the total sum of Winston's expenditure on tobacco) and had successfully presented their credentials to high authority.

No blacker act of piracy could be perpetrated than to translate into cold prose the original, colourful, and entirely faithful narrative of an adventure in the lovely West Indian Island, rightly nicknamed The Pearl of the Antilles. Their share of actual fighting was limited, but in the most picturesque circumstances the brother officers had obtained their great wish and had duly received their baptism of fire.

Before sailing for India in the trooping season of 1896 Winston was to sample the sweets—if only a very small mouthful—of a London

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Season, duty at Hounslow and Hampton Court being of an almost negligible character.

The London Season, even in the 'Nineties, had a very definite meaning; it still began early in May and ended with the precision of clock-work on the Saturday before Goodwood. All the great houses were scenes of splendid entertainment, Buckingham Palace and Marlborough House giving a lead; money had proved a passport to some—if not all—of these; South Africa was represented by wealthy magnates from Kimberley or Johannesburg, some admittedly with names suggestive of Rhine wines rather than of Burke's Peerage or Landed Gentry; balls were of nightly occurrence, "dancing men"—whether or not eligible for the matrimonial market—were in great request and figured on the carefully kept lists of hostesses who wished their gatherings to be a complete success. To no one were invitations more eagerly offered than to "Randolph's son" and, to do him justice, "Randolph's son" made himself exceedingly popular, quite obviously enjoying himself, and betraying none of the uppishness of which in later years he was sometimes, quite unjustifiably, accused.

Although the motor car had not as yet offered facilities the expensive institution known as the "week-end" had crept in, and for week-

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end parties there was no more welcome guest than the dashing young soldier who could join, and shine, in any pastime, who was an adept at tossing to and fro the ball of conversation and who could discuss politics with acumen and quote history with accuracy. Of Lord Russell Queen Victoria once said that he would be a more agreeable guest if he had any other topic of conversation than the 1688 Rebellion and himself. It would be difficult anywhere or in any company to find any topic of conversation to which Winston Churchill could not add some additional ingredient or flavour. At Deepdene, however, as the guest of "Bill Beresford," his uncle's second wife's second husband, Winston incurred the momentary displeasure of the Prince of Wales for being late for dinner. "Don't they teach you to be punctual in your Regiment?" was the rather acid question; but when it was a question of a youthful offence the wrath of Albert Edward never endured more than a twinkling of an eye; in after life "Randolph's son" was to be stoutly supported, whenever possible, although the revolutionary platform utterances of a Minister of the Crown more than once gravely offended the Sovereign.

At Deepdene was Sir Bindon Blood, who had lately leapt to fame in storming the Malakand

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Pass and was marked out for further high command. From this fine General, on a sunny Sunday morning, Winston extracted a promise that should he lead another expedition a lieutenant of the Fourth Hussars should take part in it; the promise was to be fulfilled sooner than he believed.

In the July of 1895 Lord Rosebery had fallen from the high office he had rather reluctantly assumed; the Unionists scored a thumping majority and Sir William Harcourt and "Honest John" Morley were, to their great discomfiture, dislodged from their seats and had to seek favour at the polls in Wales and Suffolk. Winston was then Tory to the bone and although he had reason to think that his father in later years had rather wavered in his convictions, his exultation in Lord Salisbury's triumph was tempered by regret that Lord Randolph could not witness the *coup de grâce* given, as it then seemed, to Mr. Gladstone's measure of Home Rule. Within a few months, however, the main topic of talk, whether in the Council Chamber or at the dinner table, was the Jameson Raid, and to its leader—a professor of medicine in private life—the Liberals rather unfairly applied the epithet of "swash-buckler". Among the Doctor's close followers

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was Sir John Willoughby, a subaltern in the Blues, who was as bold in the field with his sword or revolver as on the racecourse with his betting book, a neatly bound volume in which wagers of over four figures were frequent. Willoughby had given a little boy instructions as to how to place toy soldiers in Cavalry formation; it needed but the recollection of this and some rather superficial enquiry into the wrong of the Uitlanders for the little boy, now a stripling of twenty-one, to espouse hotly the cause of the raiders. It was perhaps rather a tame ending when the Johannesburg ring-leaders were allowed to expiate their offence in hard cash and when the British officers—despite the advocacy of smart ladies who besieged the Home Secretary clamouring for clemency—were sentenced to brief terms of not very rigorous imprisonment; Majuba, Winston must have ruefully remembered, was not yet avenged.

Service in India for a cavalry officer, who is a polo enthusiast, who enjoys adequate means and sound health is—or anyhow was—a truly delightful experience, and Winston set himself to revel in it.

The adequate means in his case were furnished from home and neither he nor the two

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brother officers who shared his luxurious quarters had need to apply to the so-called native bankers. Far different was it with the young officers in Indian regiments whose expenses were often absurdly incommensurate with their pay and whose debts to these bankers were often quite unavoidably incurred. Several years were to elapse until, under Kitchener's paternal care remedies were introduced to make income balance reasonable outgoings.

But among all the glitter and glamour, the leisure and laughter which went to make up military life at Bangalore, Winston suddenly became conscious that something was lacking; the days were full of froth and frolic, but it was all rather superficial; there awoke the desire for solid knowledge, the sort of knowledge only to be secured by stiff and steady reading. Like many other public schoolboys, he had left Harrow having formed fairly close acquaintance with Homer and Horace as poets, with Julius Cæsar as a soldier, with Aristides as a politician, and perhaps with Isaac Newton as a philosopher; he would know something about the battles of Salamis and Thermopylæ if less about Dettingen and Fontenoy; he would have rough ideas about the Reformation, the Restoration and the Great Rebellion. But history had been chiefly handed to him in the form of

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a flavourless chronicle of events, devoid of any of the intimate details which make it palatable or even digestible.

Certainly he must get down to work, and at once. Soon by every mail there would come a weighty package of substantial tomes addressed by Lady Randolph, who was herself no mean judge of what should be profitably read.

To Gibbon an eager student first addressed himself, and from midday stables to evening polo Gibbon—whether represented by the Decline and Fall or by the Autobiography—was a companion who never became a bore. It was a delightful reflection that Gibbon had once been a guest at Althorp; delightful also to remember that both as an orator and a writer Lord Randolph had modelled himself largely on the grandiloquent historian.

After Gibbon, Macaulay whose “style” was to provoke unbounded admiration. Without “books of reference” it was not easy to pick holes in the text of the Whig author, whose sense of drama sometimes drew him away from the narrow path of accuracy. But a bone could be picked with him, for he had dared not only to rise in judgment but to peck at the reputation of the great Duke. Little did a growing subaltern think that forty years later his would be the task not only to justify once and for all

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his towering ancestor¹ but, if it were possible, to screw him up a little higher than before.

L'appétit vient en mangeant; the more he read the more Winston sought to steep himself in whatever resources of literature circumstance enabled him to tap. Socrates, Plato, Schopenhauer, Malthus and—a little later and a little lower—Darwin became his familiars; and a young Hussar who a few months earlier had seemed to be flitting through life like a butterfly, never tired of this august society.

Through the heat of the day while his brother officers slept or smoked or indulged in desultory talk Winston—pencil in moist hand to make copious notes—would dig and dig into the mines of knowledge; he was genuinely and entirely absorbed in reading for reading's sake, but all the while he was equipping himself for responsibilities which would have to be incurred, for grave duties which would have to be done.

The chronicler can only from time to time comment on the volume and value of spoken and written matter for which it is not quite easy to find a parallel. The biographer—and may his task be deferred for many a long year—will determine how far a statesman's fluency

¹ As originally used the word *ancestre* was simply the designation of the foregoer or predecessor; not until more recent times was the term restricted to the progenitor.

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and felicity of phrasing were due to his early familiarity with "Classics", classics which for most of his boon companions were likely to remain sealed volumes. The habit thus formed was never to be wholly forsaken; the love of letters was never to grow cold; in after years Winston Churchill's literary interests (besides the histories, Military, Naval and Political, which were his business) covered a truly comprehensive range not even to the exclusion of some tracts on physical science.

And deep reading, as is so often the case, was to lead him to and, Laus Deo, to lead him past the age-long struggle with the Demon of Unbelief. Whether Winston Churchill had received any definite religious training at home was problematic; at school attendance at chapel, and perhaps even the practice of private prayers, was wholly perfunctory; the Seven Sacraments remained (but not in the Pauline sense) a great mystery. Now there came a sharp, if momentary, revolt against revealed religion as a whole; a revolt which issued, for a time anyhow, in a sort of mental compromise. He read and re-read such books as Winwood Read's *Martyrdom of Man*; it was all very difficult and he seems to have asked himself how it was possible to reconcile the gospel of a scribe who plumped for total anni-

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hilation of soul and body after death with the promise of the Divine Redeemer of Everlasting Life. The answer, he admitted, came very simply but very forcibly when the guns began to shoot. There were in store many difficult and dangerous passages which had to be faced; again and again under shot and shell he would see Suffering and Death—God's black policemen—stalk across the battlefield; again and again he would note how in storm and danger and in death agony mortal men rushed straight back into the Everlasting Arms.

In the summer of 1897 a not overworked officer snatched at a chance of three months leave in England; it was an opportunity of which the majority of his comrades were either too comfortable or too "hard up" to avail themselves. In the Indian Ocean torrid heat, rough weather and devastating sea-sickness prevailed; when it became a little cooler and a little calmer Winston found a kindred spirit, "a tall thin officer" with an honourably disabled hand and an incorrigibly voluble tongue. The pair struck up a friendship which, despite disparity of age and frequent differences of opinion, was to prove lasting. Their first "difference" was as to the relative prospect, and merits, of the Turks and Greeks then

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engaging in a very unequal struggle. Winston Churchill remembered how pro-Turk had been the Tory party over the Eastern question; Ian Hamilton, with poetry in his veins, had great affection for the city of the Violet Crown; they came to an agreement that they would try to follow, as newspaper correspondents, the forces they respectively favoured. But at Port Said was the news that Greece, after being very roughly handled by her formidable foe, had been compelled to sue for peace. From private letters Winston would learn that the Prince of Wales was urgently reminding Lord Salisbury that "if England would lead the way and put her foot down Greece might be rescued from the terrible position in which she was now placed." The battlefields of Thrace being a "wash out", Winston, with Gibbon in his mind if not in his hand, spent a leisurely fortnight in Rome and Naples and on reaching London was to learn that Lord Salisbury, who was never enamoured of the Turks, had put down his own foot—no light one—that Turkey had accepted the demands of the six Ambassadors who had approached her and that Greece was likely to escape on fairly easy terms from her enemy's wrathful vengeance.

From the lawns of Goodwood to the platform

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of Nowshera, then the railhead of the Malakand Field Force, meant a long and a very hot journey, the last lap including a forty mile sprint under a blazing sun and in a "tonga" drawn by galloping ponies. But, as often happened, Winston had got—or was shortly going to get—what he wanted. He had wangled leave from his Regiment, he was the accredited war correspondent of the *Pioneer*,¹ and the *Daily Telegraph* had shrewdly contracted to publish his letters and pay him £5 per column.

Better still, Sir Bindon Blood had telegraphed "Come up and we will try to fit you in." On arrival Winston once again fell on his feet; he found that owing to a casualty he could be fitted in as an orderly officer. His first move was to make his way to the tent of Captain Dick² and plead that as he was to be attached

¹ The desirability—or otherwise—of a staff officer acting as a newspaper correspondent had been aired in the Zulu War. The matter had come to a head when it was learned that a letter in *The Times* newspaper "From Our Own Correspondent" making certain allegations against Sir Bartle Frere, the High Commissioner, had been penned by the Private Secretary of Sir Garnett Wolseley, the Commander-in-Chief. Wolseley declined responsibility for anything his staff might write; Frere mildly remonstrated that "a Staff Correspondent ought to have as strong a conscience as regards his duty to his Government as his chief has, and he ought to be as careful not to fire a broadside into a brother official as he would be not to betray military secrets to the enemy." Curiously enough, five years later Lord Wolseley was to stipulate that Lord Charles Beresford must not, while on the H.Q. Staff, without asking permission, communicate with either the Admiralty or the Press.

² Later Colonel Sir Arthur Dick.

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to the Sikhs he wanted to learn Hindustani. "How can I teach you Hindustani in a night?" was the very obvious enquiry of the Cavalry officer, himself an excellent linguist. Nothing abashed, the newcomer explained that he only wanted to learn words actually necessary to make himself understood and before he slept the restricted vocabulary had been committed to memory.

Blood was not only a very brave and experienced Anglo-Indian officer, but he possessed that penetrating insight into racial characteristics which soldiers so often enjoy and which civilian officials, with their larger knowledge of books, so often miss. It is within just surmise that Winston learned no unuseful lesson in marking this trait in a General whom he held in profound respect.

The General had just returned from an expedition against the fierce tribe of the Bunerands, in which the gallant Fincastle had gained the Victoria Cross. It was a point of honour on the Indian Frontier not to leave a wounded man on the field; and a Fourth Hussar was more than once to see the fine example of a Sixteenth Lancer finely followed. Winston was out to have a taste, and quite a sharp one, of Indian Frontier fighting. For some time the treatment of the Frontier tribes had been one

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long story of failure, this largely due to an observance of the "Hit and Scuttle" method. The Home Government's chief idea had seemed to be that the raiding parties should be sent to do as much damage as possible with punitive columns to follow them up; it happened, however, that on many occasions the columns received a good deal of punishment themselves.

The present September plan was to march a force of about 10,000 men into the mountains through the valleys of Dir and Bajaur; these would then head for the plains, subjugating *en passant* the Mohmands, who had shown themselves very truculent in the neighbourhood of Peshawar. The expedition opened with an attack on the camp by the Mohmands who had no cause whatever for quarrel with the British but who now delivered, apparently for the fun of the thing, a vicious assault which cost us some ugly casualties. A minor punitive expedition was to be led out by a Brigadier and with it Winston lightheartedly went. The Brigade was split into three detachments, each of which had its special "punitive" mission; the Thirty-Fifth Sikhs were to make an attack on the miscreants, and a squadron of Bengal Lancers were to keep touch with the reserve, which consisted of the Buffs. Winston, true to

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character, went along with the Sikhs and quickly found himself engaged in a brief but bloody struggle; a Cavalry soldier, when *en route* for the theatre of war, is generally inspired by the idea that the conflict will resolve itself into a personal encounter between himself and his country's leading opponent; in turn one has heard Ara-by, the Made-y, Kruger, Kaiser Bill and Adolf as food for an individual sword. A personal combat was in store for Winston; a Sikh had been laid low with a wound and the leading tribesman, a gigantic savage, had rushed upon the prostrate figure and slashed at him. The blood of the Churchills was up; his first idea was to attack the Russian with a cavalry sword, but a moment's reflection suggested the revolver as a more deadly weapon. The tribesman at twenty yards distance hurled a huge boulder and then stood flourishing his sword; there came three shots from the revolver, of which the last was decisive, and the Mohmand fell to rise no more. There ensued, however, an ugly moment as the tribesmen were all around and the Sikhs at some distance. Winston used his legs, never specially adapted for running, to the highest advantage, rejoined the Sikhs and then, helping to carry wounded men away, made his way to the Company reserve at the bottom of the spur.

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The Buffs were a half-mile away and Winston was asked to go and tell them to hurry up; he started on his errand at best speed and then was to show how essential it is that a stout heart should have for its mate a cool head. Perhaps the tragedy of the Prince Imperial and Captain Carey recurred to him; anyhow, his mind pictured the Sikhs wiped out and himself arriving breathless as the sole survivor. "I must have that order in writing," he respectfully insisted, but scarcely was the message pencilled on the leaf of a notebook when the situation changed. A well aimed volley from the Sikhs drove the tribesmen up the hill and with their departure came the arrival of the Buffs. Buffs and Sikhs combined to take the spur of the hill down which the latter had been pushed, to recover any prestige which might have been lost, and to recover the body of the Adjutant. There only remained the rather unpleasant obligation of following Blood's orders conveyed by helio; to lay waste the valley, village by village, to blow down towers, to fill up roads, to burn crops and to cut down trees. It all sounded a little savage, but presumably British honour had to be satisfied, however heavy the cost. Time alone would show whether these "punitive" expeditions were worth while.

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The Malakand operations was now to give place to the larger Tirah Campaign; Winston, who had been posted for a few weeks to the Thirty-first Punjab Infantry, cast longing eyes towards a further field of fire. But it was not to be; even the goodwill of Lord Roberts could not prevail against Sir George White, the Commander-in-Chief in India, who decided it was high time for a regimental officer to return to his regiment, a decision which his long-suffering brother officers entirely endorsed.

But the winter of 1897 was big with an important event; it marked the first appearance of Winston Spencer Churchill—as distinct from Winston Churchill—as an author. And the book was to prove itself a “standard work,” or anyhow, a book of reference, and under the title of *The Malakand Field Force* was to offer an immediate success and to be widely, and wisely, read. Never perhaps since Fanny Burney—just a hundred and twenty years earlier—burst in on the world with *Evelina* had the début of a writer been so loudly acclaimed. “Scholars and statesmen,” we are told, “were not ashamed to own that they could not tear themselves away from *Evelina*.” Now statesmen, soldiers, anyone who took any interest in India, and the reading public generally, were to greet with enthusiasm and approval a volume

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which represented a section of military history in the guise of delightful narrative. The Prince of Wales, of whom Mr. Gladstone said that "He knows everything except what is written in books," led the chorus of social praise and showed that, anyhow, he had read this book from cover to cover. But the Prince ranked writing as distinctly less important than soldiering; for him the sword was a far better weapon than the pen, and there was just a little squeeze of lemon juice over the concluding words: "Having seen active service you will wish to see more and have as great a chance of winning the V.C. as Fincastle¹ had; and I hope you will not follow the example of the latter, who, I regret to say, intends leaving the Army and instead going into Parliament."

After the *Malakand Field Force*, a novel; it was the story—well written, vigorous and highly imaginative—of a revolt in an unnamed republic, probably the Balkans; there was plenty of fighting—the innate fighting spirit of the writer had been stimulated by recent experience—some rather nebulous politics, some rather questionable philosophy, and a running thread of love interest. *Savrola* found its way into Macmillan's Magazine; it ran into several editions and proved a money spinner—after

¹ Viscount Fincastle, V.C., later 8th Earl of Dunmore.

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the resounding success just achieved with a war story it could scarcely be otherwise. But the author took himself—and all his works—too seriously to be entirely satisfied with anything less than history; he did not encourage his friends to read the romance and the experiment was not to be repeated.

But fighting rather than writing was the dominant thought; the pen might for a time be wiped but the sword must not rest, or rust, in the scabbard. The Tirah expedition had resulted in what is euphemistically called “a withdrawal”, but might be more correctly, if more bluntly, termed a retreat—and one of those retreats which only just miss the features of a rout. The Afridis, in their mountain ridges, had proved themselves deadly foes, and critics—chiefly of the armchair species—were vocal about an enterprise undertaken without close calculation of the cost in men or money: of Sir William Lockhart’s admirable handling of troops in an impracticable country; of the superb behaviour of the Gordon Highlanders and the Sikhs there could be no question. The heroism of Piper Findlater, who, at the storming of the Dargi, continued to blow his bagpipes in a sitting posture because his legs had been blown off, shines as one of the jewels in military history.

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Sir William, whose knowledge of India generally, and Frontier fighting more especially, was then almost unrivalled, had made it widely known that his withdrawal was due to the rigours of winter and that with the spring he would try conclusions with his savage opponents. Mild measures were to be ruled out; "it would be as easy," it was aptly said, "to fondle a brood of wild cats."

Winston was determined that this forthcoming "show" must not take place without his taking part in it. The immediate consideration was how to "get at" Sir William Lockhart; for a junior subaltern a G.O.C. in the field is an awesome personage, and here it was an open secret that in a few months this G.O.C. would replace Sir George White in supreme command. Greatly daring and with the grave risk of overstepping his leave, Winston took train to Peshawar and sought an interview with the favourite and favoured A.D.C., Captain Haldane.¹ The result was entirely and rather unexpectedly satisfactory; whether or no Haldane reminded his chief that Winston's facile pen and fertile brain might be of special value is a matter for speculation, as is also how the Colonel of the Fourth Hussars regarded this highly irregular, and rather off-hand, pro-

¹ Later Major-General Sir James Haldane, K.C.B.

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cedure. Anyhow, within half an hour there came a message that Winston was forthwith to assume the rather elastic duties of orderly officer on the General's personal staff, that the Government of India and his regiment would be duly informed.

The new orderly officer was quickly to justify his appointment; a war correspondent who had been sent home had taken his revenge by contributing to the *Fortnightly Review* a very bitter article about the Tirah expedition; many things, according to this prejudiced writer, had been done which ought not to have been done and other things which most certainly ought to have been done had been left undone.

The wound, however irresponsible the hand which inflicted it, had rankled with the General and even more with Headquarters Staff; it had been decided that General Nicholson,¹ the Chief of Staff, should pen a reply to appear in the next number of a highly respected magazine. "Old Nick" was the precise converse of the Prince of Wales; he knew everything that was written in books but was sadly deficient in knowledge of human nature; he may have been the incarnation of good staff work but had little in his breast of the milk of human kindness; he was intensely jealous of his reputation

¹ Later Field Marshal Lord Nicholson.

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and bitterly resented what he considered an indirect, and unjust, attack on it. In the course of a casual conversation, Winston heard of what had happened and lost not a moment in suggesting that the War Office might regard with great disfavour—if not something more—a Staff Officer of high rank who engaged in controversy with a disgruntled war correspondent. The G.O.C. at once admitted the force of the argument and proposed to telegraph to the War Office and beg that pressure should be put on the editor not to print Nicholson's article. Winston was sure there was a far, far better way. The editor of the *Fortnightly*, Mr. W. L. Courtney, was not only a man of letters but also a well-known and genial man of the world; it only needed a personal request from the General and the article would certainly either be consigned to the flames or sent back to its writer. Winston, who had already ingratiated himself with Sir William and his staff, now rose higher still in favour, and, without undue optimism, felt sure of serious and confidential duties in the forthcoming important Frontier Campaign. It came, therefore, as a sharp personal disappointment when contemplated operations gave way to active negotiations with the tribesmen and when these issued in a peace which,

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if a little patchy, was generally approved.

But, if there were peace in Asia, there certainly was war in Africa. On assuming office in 1895, Lord Salisbury quickly told Lord Cromer that there was no definite prospect of any expedition to the Sudan. Circumstances, however, alter cases, and later in the year England was looking with a benevolent eye on Italy's efforts in Eritrea against the Abyssinians. It did not seem quite fair that the Italians, while holding with no little difficulty their own against the hardy mountaineers, should have their Western flank threatened by the Dervish whom we then regarded as our own particular enemy. Italy was our traditional friend; she was in sore trouble and we must hold out to her a helping hand. Early in 1896 the idea was mooted that we might best do this by a demonstration—but no more than a demonstration—in force on the Nile. The subject was allowed to simmer for some weeks, but when on March 1st the news was flashed home of the Italian débâcle at Adua the Cabinet in an access of fervour decided that, with the two-fold purpose of drawing off pressure from Italy and of redeeming an unhappy country from tyranny and slavery, there must be no mere demonstration but a genuine and immediate

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advance in force, with Khartoum as the objective. To the authorities in Egypt it had come as a bolt from the blue when, on March 13th, a Reuter's telegram in *The Times* newspaper announced that the Government intended to propel an expedition up the Nile, though its immediate mission was officially restricted to the re-conquest of the Dongala Province.

The River War (of which Churchill became a self-appointed but first-rate exponent) was bound to be mainly a matter of transport and supply, and as regards hierarchy of command is without exact parallel. Kitchener, who four years earlier had succeeded Sir Francis Grenfell¹ as Sirdar, was under the orders of Lord Cromer,² the British Agent. The War office only spoke when spoken to and disclaimed any responsibility. The Soldier's genius for organisation was to overcome every obstacle to final victory; the wholehearted support of the Statesman was to nerve him for every effort. "For a great enterprise," Kitchener declared at the Guildhall Banquet, "a master-mind is necessary. Lord Cromer was our master and it is due to his able direction that the re-conquest of the Sudan was accomplished."

¹ Later Field Marshal Lord Grenfell.

² First Earl of Cromer.

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While Winston was sunning himself in Bangalore, Pall Mall, or Peshawar, the Battle of Firket had been fought, Dongola had been reoccupied, the railway from Halfa to Abu Hamed had been laid, Berber had been seized, Kassala—at the earnest request of the Italians—had been taken over, the battle of the Atbara had been won; and all this, in toil and sweat, in heat and sandstorm, in gnawing anxiety and wearing suspense, in the teeth of almost every obstacle which nature or circumstance could adduce. It remained only for Kitchener to lead his mixed force of 20,000 men (the precise number he quoted fourteen years earlier as required to crush the Mahdist movement) up to the Dervish capital and try his final throw with the Khalifa. The curtain was about to be rung up for the last, and most sensational, act of a great drama, and Winston Churchill would be false to his convictions if he did not cast himself for a short but showy part in it. It was unthinkable that Khartoum should be taken, that the Sudan should be redeemed and the Khalifa and all his works should be exterminated without his active co-operation. He was fully aware that military shoulders were being shrugged, that regimental officers were murmuring—if not more—about favouritism, about shirking plain duty and leaving it to be

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done by others who had no passports to high places. Medal hunting and self-advertising were terms unkindly, but perhaps not altogether inexcusably, applied. But all this weighed as dust with a soldier who, by no means to his discredit, precisely corresponded with Larousse's definition of an "arriviste." Leave, of which he seems to have had a very rich share, was due to him; he would take boat and train to London and backed, as he knew he would be, by powerful influence, he would be enabled to drive a nail into the Khalifa's coffin and, incidentally, enhance his own rapidly rising reputation. Arriving in the capital at the end of June, he felt there was little time to spare; no social string was too strong or too delicate to be pulled on behalf of a young man who, however highly and however justly he might rate himself, was still to many "Randolph's son"; not a few of the strings were in feminine hands and to the feminine touch Sir Evelyn Wood, the then Adjutant-General, was particularly susceptible.

He became quickly aware that his views did not coincide with those of the Sirdar, who always disliked having officers thrust upon him either for ornamental duty or for service in the Egyptian Army, the force which was so largely his creature and of which he was so rightly

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proud. A very exalted personage had begged him to take on his staff a very popular Guards officer; the personage was so exalted that the request could scarcely have been refused, but somehow Kitchener never received the letter.

The strings in London were now quickly at work on Winston's behalf and to be pulled for all they were worth. Lady Randolph lent all her gifts and graces to further her son's wishes and even wrote herself to Kitchener, with whom she had a bowing acquaintance. The answer was couched in the most courteous terms; but it was intimated that there were more than enough officers for the campaign, there was a stream of claimants to be employed, many of whom had special qualifications; Mr. Churchill's name would be noted in case some future occasion should be found for his services. It was all very odd, or appeared so; Sir Henry Wolff, Sir Bindon Blood, Sir William Lockhart, when approached, had all surrendered at discretion; why was Sir Herbert Kitchener so irresponsible? Was it ignorance on his part, or a strange lack of appreciation of a very valuable offer of service? Could it be possible that in the long and toilsome marches studded by constant calamities which no eye could foresee, in the diabolical episode of the bursting of the Zafir, in the grave doubts as to the supply of water for

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the railway line, in that stifling tent at Berber while grappling with figures to satisfy a rather harsh Finance Secretary as to the cost of the campaign, in his meticulous care for the smallest detail which might affect the great advance; could all these, and a hundred other worries, have blinded Herbert Kitchener to the feats and fame of Winston Churchill? Perish the thought; it was clearly a case of sour opposition on the part of a man who, however honest and hard-working, had held but little converse with the man of the world and less with the man at the Club, and for whom the Egyptian Army was the "be all and end all" of his concern.

The root difference between the two men at that time—but only at that time—was that the younger thought, or seemed to think, that the Army existed for the benefit of the officer, while the elder was sure that the officer only existed for the benefit of the Army—anyhow, as regards the Egyptian Army. In flux of time the one mellowed greatly and did everything within his power to further the well-being of individual officers and "other ranks". The other grew to take a larger view of affairs, to sink personal interest in public requirements, and to go far to agree with the man, for whom "my work" was his motto and for whom the

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work and not the workman was what really mattered.

Sixteen years were to elapse before two faithful servants of the Crown would unite to work in close amity against their country's bitter foe. Their personal relations then may be illustrated by a single incident. When, in May, 1915, the Coalition Government was being formed and all seats were being handed in, the First Lord of the Admiralty found himself without knowledge of his own future and without information, other than to be derived from the newspapers, as to what was taking place in the theatres of war. Kitchener, on hearing this, at once ordered his motor-car, interrupted his morning's work, and drove to Mr. Churchill's residence to give him the last news from Sir John French and Sir Ian Hamilton. It is never quite easy for two men of vision to see eye to eye as to precise procedure, but it can be affirmed that neither of these two whether in or out of office ever sought to belittle the merits or the fame of the other.

Meanwhile, in these hectic summer days, there was left for Winston one stone to be turned, and it was a large stone. Lord Salisbury had read the *Malakand Field Force* with considerable pleasure and had acquired from it a con-

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siderable slice of information. He intimated that he would be glad if the author could make it convenient to call on him at the Foreign Office; the author, of course, made it quite convenient and further impressed the Prime Minister with his range of general knowledge and his clarity of view. Probably Lord Randolph was only lightly touched on in the conversation. The story—no doubt quite apocryphal—had run that when Lord Salisbury was asked if he were likely to offer Lord Randolph another seat in the Cabinet the reply was to the effect that if a boil on one's neck has dispersed one does not do anything to cause it to gather again. There came the leading question: would Lord Salisbury ask Kitchener to give Winston a chance? To Lord Salisbury Kitchener owed much; in the days when he was almost unknown he had been bidden to Hatfield and at every turn the Prime Minister had been his champion and his friend. Moreover, it was common knowledge that when there arose a question of supreme military control being given to Grenfell, Lord Salisbury bluntly said that if any other General than Kitchener were appointed to lead the expedition the Cabinet would have to find another Prime Minister. Lord Salisbury sent a telegram but in rather half-hearted terms; final appeal was

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made again through feminine channels, and, as a considerable part of the River force had now been drawn from the British Army, pressure from Pall Mall could be successfully applied. The result of a very vigorous social push was that Winston was appointed supernumerary to the 21st Lancers and was bidden by telegram to join them at Abbaseyeh Barracks.

From Abbaseyeh to the Albara was a matter of more than a week's journey by camel and steamer; a contrast to the rapid transit of to-day, to the few of us left who helped to form the Gordon Relief Expedition and who made our laborious way in whalers or on camels, the Lancers seem to have got over the ground with astonishing speed and punctuality.

On August 27th the army of 8,200 British and 17,000 Egyptian soldiers was concentrated on the left bank of the River at the head of the Sixth Cataract. Then, for three days the troops moving forward, preceded by a network of mounted men, scarcely saw a Dervish and rumour ran that the Khalifa's bluff had been called, that he had packed up and gone to the South. But early on September 1st the Cavalry were greeted by the sight which pleased them far more than their first view of Omdurman with the Mahdi's Tomb rising yellow above the mud

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huts and the Khartoum Palace in the distance. For in the plain and to the west of Omdurman lay a long dark line dotted with horsemen and flags and, as the Cavalry went forward to reconnoitre, the line rose up and revealed itself as a solid mass of foemen. Winston Churchill was to be quickly busy and important; and business and importance were equally dear to him. First he was sent forward from the support to the outpost lines, where he found his Commanding Officer, Colonel Martin, who bade him take stock of the situation and then ride back and report to the Sirdar. Kitchener and Churchill were to meet; the dashing subaltern, typical of the past, was to salute the "dead certainty" General suggestive of the future. There was a fairly long gallop across the sands before the galloper espied the advancing infantry. Riding some length in front of his Headquarters Staff, his standard bearers of the Egyptian Flag and the Union Jack behind him, the Sirdar, mounted on his big charger, presented, all unconsciously, a dramatic picture. What would be his attitude to the young officer whose advent he had sought to forbid? The omnipotent General might send him back to the base, he might cause him to be detailed for remounts, or relegated to some drab duty; he might even

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instruct him to deliver his message to a A.D.C.; at least there would be some sign of resentment. These were some of the thoughts which chased one another across the stage of Winston's mind as he sped on his errand. Was it a relief, or rather discomfiting, that the Sirdar seemed wholly unruffled and absorbed in his own thoughts? Either Kitchener did not recognise him or, if he did, he was entirely indifferent as to the identity of the messenger, provided the message was tersely and correctly delivered, as it certainly was. An enquiry as to the proximity of the Khalifa's force was promptly answered—as the result of careful calculations—and a grave bow concluded the interview, the first of many hundred colloquies which were destined to follow in later years of strain and storm.

The night of the 1st September passed silently and before dawn the mounted troops were sent out to reconnoitre and were quickly aware that the enemy were about to advance *en masse* with the intention of surrounding and crushing our zareba. The Khalifa with his brothers, his black flags, and a reserve of some 17,000 of his best troops, had posted himself behind Jebel Surgham; Osman Azrak was detailed to lead some 8,000 men straight across the plain to our position and to detach another

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body of 6,000 men to attack the left flank of our zareba. Osman Sheikh-El-ed-Din was to head another force of about 15,000 men and make for the Kerreri Hills with an eye to our left flank, while the task of Ali Wad Helu, with 5,000 men, was to descend on the River beyond our right flank and cut off any retreat to the North. The British and Egyptian troops stood calmly in semi-circular form awaiting the attack; the line measured about 3,000 yards, and in gaps between the units were placed the little field guns and maxims, the main gun strength being towards the left flank. The 21st Lancers were for the moment withdrawn behind Littleton's second brigade, which included the Grenadier Guards; the Egyptian horsemen and camelmen were to hold the top of the Kerreri Hills, with orders to check any threatened assault against the Egyptian brigade on the right.

Soon after 6 a.m. the first of the Dervish formations came within range of the artillery, the Guards soon afterwards opening fire at 2,700 yards; other battalions took up the firing, and Osman Azrak with his 8,000 followers staggered and sank under a hail of shell and bullets. But there was little faltering and no turning back; where a hundred fell a hundred more jostled forward to take their places; with

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fine courage and fierce curses the surging mob headed straight for the line of death-dealing rifles and, reckless of losses, pressed on to within 300 yards of the Sudanese brigades. There and then they faded away; masses became groups and groups driblets, driblets became single men who flung up their arms and dropped. Within forty minutes 2,000 brave barbarians, including Osman himself, were killed and twice that number wounded. The remainder crouched in the folds of the ground and fired fitfully on.

The Duke of Wellington would say that his Cavalry often got him into scrapes, but, to do them justice, always got themselves out. Broadwood's¹ Brigade had suddenly found themselves up against Osman Sheikh-El-ed-Din and 15,000 followers, mostly with rifles in their hands. His camel corps was soon in difficulties and he was about to launch an Egyptian cavalry charge to rescue his camelmen when a large gunboat appeared close by the bank and opened fire on the Dervishes, who halted, broke and withdrew behind one of the Kerreri Hills. The Sirdar now saw that if he would avoid a dangerous house-to-house fight in Omdurman his force must get there while the Dervishes were still out in the desert; the 21st Lancers were sent out to reconnoitre and to drive off

¹ Major-General Broadwood, 12th Lancers, killed in 1917.

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any Dervishes cumbering the road between the zariba and the town; the rest of the army was set in motion in echelon of brigades.

In pushing forward down the eastern slope of Jebel Surgham, the advanced patrols of the Lancers reported a party of about a thousand Arabs in a khor about a mile to the south-west. Unaware of the Khalifa's powerful reserve force, and himself a profound believer in the *arme blanche*, Colonel Martin decided to deal with the gentry in the khor by means of a cavalry charge. Eager for the fray and to raise up a name for the regiment, the Lancers swung into line, hacked their way through crowds of infuriated Hadendoa, gained the opposite slope of the khor and prepared to charge back again. But in two minutes they had lost 70 men and 120 horses and could only hurry round the right flank and, by opening fire with their carbines, drive the Dervishes back into the arms of the Khalifa and his reserve.

By the time the Lancers had re-formed and recovered breath the first British troops had reached the lower eastern slopes of Jebel Surg-ham, when heavy firing was heard from Macdonald's brigade (9th, 10th, and 11th Sudanese) which the Khalifa's Black Flag reserve was trying to maul. Wauchope and Collinson were quickly sent to give a help-

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ing hand; Generals Lyttelton, Maxwell and Lewis were told to change front to the right and attack Jebel Surgham and the Khalifa's right flank. Despite the relief afforded to him, Macdonald would have been more than hard pressed had not the three brigades with all haste stormed Jebel Surgham and brought to bear from its heights a volume of deadly fire on the Black Flag and on the Khalifa's right flank. But Macdonald was not yet out of the wood, as what looked like an entirely new Dervish army, but what proved to be 15,000 of the followers of Osman Sheikh-El-ed-din and Ali Wad Helu, suddenly appeared from Kerreri's hills and hurled themselves against his right and rear flanks. The doughty Scotsman formed his right battalion rapidly to the right, moved his left battalion into a longer line, advanced his Egyptian battalion to prolong his new left, and broke off company's guns and maxims on his old left, sending them full speed across to lengthen the right flank, thus completely changing front from facing south-west to facing north-west against the new attack. On the parade-ground this movement would not have been without complications; for excitable black troops to carry it out under a heavy fire was little short of a miracle, and, anyhow, went to exhibit the quick brain of the

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Brigadier and the fine stuff of which his black brigade was made up. But eager to be at the enemy with the bayonet, the troops loosed off nearly all their cartridges as fast as they could, and by the time the Arabs had come within 20 yards their pouches were nearly empty. At this second critical moment, however, the Lincolns doubled up and so damaged the Dervishes with oblique fire, that, impotent to get to closer quarters, they thought it time to cut their immense losses and make for the desert. The day was won and the Sirdar, could say his *consummatum est*. Advancing westward in a long line, firing as they went, his troops hustled the enemy in front of them, breaking up any groups that tried to re-form, and scattering Arabs in every direction. Just before noon the brigades were re-formed and directed on Omdurman, whilst the cavalry harried the retreating Dervishes and hunted them away from the city. Over 10,000 Dervish corpses were counted on the field and elsewhere during the next few days; at least as many more were wounded, and nearly 5,000 prisoners remained in our hands, many of whom were forthwith enrolled in our Sudanese battalions. On our side three British officers had been killed and seventeen wounded, while of other ranks only twenty-five British, of whom twenty

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belonged to the 21st Lancers, had been killed, and 136 British and 261 natives wounded—a casualty roll of under two per cent.

“To put the fight into a nutshell,” General John Maxwell, commanding 12th, 13th and 14th Sudanese, aptly remarked in a letter home, “our fire of artillery, maxims, gunboats and infantry was terrific, and nothing could stand against it. I do not exaggerate in putting the Dervishes at 45,000; they marched beautifully, in excellent formation, and delivered a fine but hopeless attack. They were as brave as men could be, and had the Khalifa let us attack him I think we should still be outside Omdurman and many of us in no position to write home.

Eddie Wortley had a show on the other bank; you will hear all about it and it will not lose in his recital. Winston Churchill is a (). I will leave you to fill in the blank. Anyhow he is brave as a lion.”

The day was indeed ours. “Ouf, it is all over and I feel like a rag,” murmured the Sirdar that night to one of his Staff. He had only now to make his way to Fashoda, to prove himself a diplomat no less than a soldier, and then to return to Omdurman and make out his bill. The total expenditure in cash from March,

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1896, to February, 1899, was well under two and a half millions, about a fourth of a day's cost of the present War; for this modest sum and with the loss of about 60 British and 160 Egyptian lives the Dervish power had been shattered for ever, the Sudan redeemed and reoccupied, nearly a million square miles brought under Anglo-Egyptian rule, about 700 miles of permanent railway constructed and, above all, there had been wiped out the stain traced on our shield by the murder of General Gordon. However crowded, however exalted his later life, Winston must surely review Omdurman as one of its outstanding episodes.

APPENDIX

Extract from Lieutenant Churchill's Journal

I propose to describe exactly what happened to me: what I saw and what I felt. I recalled it to my mind so frequently after the event that the impression is as clear and vivid as it was a quarter of a century ago. The troop I commanded was, when we wheeled into line, the second from the right of the regiment. I was riding a handy, sure-footed, grey Arab polo pony. Before we wheeled and began to

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gallop, the officers had been marching with drawn swords. On account of my shoulder I had always decided that if I were involved in hand-to-hand fighting, I must use a pistol and not a sword. I had purchased in London a Mauser automatic pistol, then the newest and the latest design. I had practised carefully with this during our march and journey up the river. This then was the weapon with which I determined to fight. I had first of all to return my sword into its scabbard, which is not the easiest thing to do at a gallop. I had then to draw my pistol from its wooden holster and bring it to full cock. This dual operation took an appreciable time, and until it was finished, apart from a few glances to my left to see what effect the fire was producing, I did not look up at the general scene.

Then I saw immediately before me, and now only half the length of a polo ground away, the row of crouching blue figures firing frantically, wreathed in white smoke. On my right and left my neighbouring troop leaders made a good line. Immediately behind was a long dancing row of lances couched for the charge. We were going at a fast but steady gallop. There was too much trampling and rifle fire to hear any bullets. After this glance to the right and left and at my troop, I looked again towards the enemy. The scene appeared to be suddenly transformed. The blue-black men were still firing, but behind them there now came into view a depression

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like a shallow sunken road. This was crowded and crammed with men rising up from the ground where they had hidden. Bright flags appeared as if by magic, and I saw arriving from nowhere Emirs on horseback among and around the mass of the enemy. The Dervishes appeared to be ten or twelve deep at the thickest, a great grey mass gleaming with steel, filling the dry watercourse. In the same twinkling of an eye I saw also that our right overlapped their left, that my troop would just strike the edge of their array, and that the troop on my right would charge into air. My subaltern comrade on the right, Wormald of the 7th Hussars, could see the situation too; and we both increased our speed to the very fastest gallop and curved inwards like the horns of the moon. One really had not time to be frightened or to think of anything else but these particular necessary actions which I have described. They completely occupied mind and senses.

The collision was now very near. I saw immediately before me, not ten yards away, the two blue men who lay in my path. They were perhaps a couple of yards apart. I rode at the interval between them. They both fired. I passed through the smoke conscious that I was unhurt. The trooper immediately behind me was killed at this place and at this moment, whether by these shots or not I do not know. I checked my pony as the ground began to fall away beneath his feet. The clever animal

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dropped like a cat four or five feet down on to the sandy bed of the watercourse, and in this sandy bed I found myself surrounded by what seemed to be dozens of men. They were not thickly-packed enough at this point for me to experience any actual collision with them. Whereas Grenfell's troop next but one on my left was brought to a complete standstill and suffered very heavy losses, we seemed to push our way through as one has sometimes seen mounted policemen break up a crowd. In less time than it takes to relate, my pony had scrambled up the other side of the ditch. I looked round.

Once again I was on the hard, crisp desert, my horse at a trot. I had the impression of scattering Dervishes running to and fro in all directions. Straight before me a man threw himself on the ground. The reader must remember that I had been trained as a cavalry soldier to believe that if ever cavalry broke into a mass of infantry, the latter would be at their mercy. My first idea, therefore, was that the man was terrified. But simultaneously I saw the gleam of his curved sword as he drew it back for a ham-string cut. I had room and time enough to turn my pony out of his reach, and leaning over on the off side I fired two shots into him at about three yards. As I straightened myself in the saddle, I saw before me another figure with uplifted sword. I raised my pistol and fired. So close were we that the pistol itself actually struck him. Man and sword

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disappeared below and behind me. On my left, ten yards away, was an Arab horseman in a bright-coloured tunic and steel helmet, with chain-mail hangings. I fired at him. He turned aside. I pulled my horse into a walk and looked around again.

In one respect a cavalry charge is very like ordinary life. So long as you are all right, firmly in your saddle, your horse in hand, and well armed, lots of enemies will give you a wide berth. But as soon as you have lost a stirrup, have a rein cut, have dropped your weapon, are wounded, or your horse is wounded then is the moment when from all quarters enemies rush upon you. Such was the fate of not a few of my comrades in the troops immediately on my left. Brought to an actual standstill in the enemy's mass, clutched at from every side, stabbed at and hacked at by spear and sword, they were dragged from their horses and cut to pieces by the infuriated foe. But this I did not at the time see or understand. My impressions continued to be sanguine. I thought we were masters of the situation, riding the enemy down, scattering them and killing them. I pulled my horse up and looked about me. There was a mass of Dervishes about forty or fifty yards away on my left. They were huddling and clumping themselves together, rallying for mutual protection. They seemed wild with excitement, dancing about on their feet, shaking their spears up and down. The whole scene seemed to flicker. I have an impression, but it

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is too fleeting to define, of brown-clad Lancers mixed up here and there with this surging mob. The scattered individuals in my immediate neighbourhood made no attempt to molest me. Where was my troop? Where were the other troops of the squadron? Within a hundred yards of me I could not see a single officer or man. I looked back at the Dervish mass. I saw two or three riflemen crouching and aiming their rifles at me from the fringe of it. Then for the first time that morning I experienced a sudden sensation of fear. I felt myself absolutely alone. I thought these riflemen would hit me and the rest devour me like wolves. What a fool I was to loiter like this in the midst of the enemy! I crouched over the saddle, spurred my horse into a gallop and drew clear of the *mélée*. Two or three hundred yards away I found my troop all ready faced about and partly formed up.

But now from the direction of the enemy there came a succession of grisly apparitions; horses spouting blood, struggling on three legs, men staggering on foot, men bleeding from terrible wounds, fish-hook spears stuck right through them, arms and faces cut to pieces, bowels protruding, men gasping, crying, collapsing, expiring. Our first task was to succour these; and meanwhile the blood of our leaders cooled. They remembered for the first time that we had carbines. Everything was still in great confusion. But trumpets were sounded and

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orders shouted, and we all moved off at a trot towards the flank of the enemy. Arrived at a position from which we could enfilade and rake the watercourse, two squadrons were dismounted and in a few minutes with their fire at three hundred yards compelled the Dervishes to retreat. We therefore remained in possession of the field. Within twenty minutes of the time when we had first wheeled into line and begun our charge, we were halted and breakfasting in the very water-course that had so nearly proved our undoing. There one could see the futility of the much vaunted *Arme Blanche*. The Dervishes had carried off their wounded, and the corpses of thirty or forty enemy were all that could be counted on the ground. Among these lay the bodies of over twenty Lancers, so hacked and mutilated as to be mostly unrecognisable. In all, out of 310 officers and men the regiment had lost in the space of about two or three minutes five officers and sixty-five men killed and wounded, and 120 horses—nearly a quarter of its strength.

The destruction of the Dervish power accomplished, Kitchener, who regarded economy as the handmaid of efficiency, sent the British troops down the Nile, and in Cairo, Winston pluckily volunteered not a transfusion of blood but a translation of flesh. His friend—and the

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friend of everybody—Dick Molyneux¹ of the Royal Horse Guards, had been severely wounded in the charge by a sword thrust and now, at the hands of a huge Irish surgeon, a piece of skin was cut from the arm of the Hussar and affixed to the wrist of the Blue.

Back in England, Winston at once set himself to plan his future, or anyhow his immediate future. Despite a startling rise in South African gold mining shares which he had rather fortuitously acquired, Lord Randolph had only been able to leave sufficient assets to cover his liabilities; to “soldier” with any comfort in the Cavalry on his allowance of £500 a year was out of the question and, further, Winston was sure that he must not tap, even to that amount, Lady Randolph’s not too large resources. Whatever faults may be assigned, justly or unjustly, one fact is crystal clear: never did mother have a more dutiful or more devoted son. Obviously, the course open to him was to return to India, to win the Polo Tournament, and then “send in his papers” and dedicate himself to writing. Tempting offers from publishers and editors were already to hand; his fees and royalties would be on a constantly increasing scale; the *River War* was already a

¹ Major the Hon. R. Molyneux.

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good deal more than a bird in the bush. Both polo and pen were to prove winners and, as regards the latter, until he succeeded to a portion of the estate of his cousin, Lord Herbert Vane Tempest,¹ Winston was to keep himself—and later his family—by his own exertions. But that November there was to be an incident pregnant with promise. The idea of a brief spell at the University had only been entertained to be dismissed; Parliament, however, was an *idée fixe*. Strolling one morning into the Conservative Social Office to discuss a possible constituency with his second cousin once removed, Fitzroy Stewart,² Winston's eyes lighted on a little book with the label "Speakers Wanted." Here was indeed a case of matching a man with an opportunity. The Party wanted platform speakers immediately and Winston at the moment wanted nothing better than to speak. Bath was to be the scene of a maiden speech; the Chairman in his opening remarks was almost embarrassingly flattering and Winston devoutly hoped that these might not reach his comrades in the 4th Hussars verbatim. Winston's own speech was greeted with rounds of applause and the next day the *Morning Post*, under the friendly direction of Oliver Borth-

¹ Third son of 5th Marquis of Londonderry.

² Fourth son of Earl of Galloway.

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wick,¹ gave it both a column and a leaderette; the oration itself, however happily phrased, was only of passing value, but it was the first of a long series of utterances which in forty years have filled countless columns in the newspapers and innumerable pages of Hansard.

Back on what proved to be a flying visit to India the Meerut Polo Tournament was the great event. Two days before the fixture Winston slipped on the staircase, put out his right shoulder, and his elbow had to be strapped to within a few inches of his side; a difficulty like this, however painful, had only to be met to be overcome. Despite the disability, he could not be spared from the team of the 4th Hussars when they met the redoubtable 4th Dragoon Guards in the final. A desperately hard-fought game resulted in the Cup going to the Hussars, a victory almost entirely due to the excellence of the team work. But the team would never play together again; one of them was killed and another wounded in the Boer War; Winston, whose contribution had been invaluable, was to suffer recurring pain from his shoulder and his later appearances on the polo ground were a little ungainly and not markedly successful. But the Regiment

¹ Only son of Lord Glenesk.

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had won the trophy and Winston had kept his promise to his father's friend; he could return to England and take up politics as a profession, blending them profitably with literature. On his way back he wisely halted in Cairo to collect information for the *River War* which, notwithstanding manifold distractions and feverish activities, was beginning to assume shape. Proofs were shown to Lord Cromer, who, when invited, used a blue pencil with some freedom but augured entire success for the book. Reginald Wingate, William Garstin, Percy Girouard and Slatin Pasha were among the authorities closely consulted, and at the end of a fortnight the author was equipped with all the local colour required to ensure for his work the fame it richly deserved. The question has at times been asked why there exists for the military student no official history of the Omdurman Campaign; many answers have been given but the correct one is that *The River War*, admirable in construction, accurate in statement, and copious in detail would render any other record otiose and unsatisfactory.

Early in 1899 it had dawned on Winston Churchill that another bearer of that name had already acquired no little literary cele-

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brity; the Atlantic divided the writers but the reading public were getting a little "mixed" and it was time to make clear once and for all which was which. There ensued a correspondence where flowers of flattery and goodwill were mutually strewn; Winston Churchill, the American, never stepped outside the literary field he so admirably adorned; Winston Spencer Churchill—as he now proposed to be permanently addressed—was already a soldier of no little merit and would mount step by step to one of the first places in the gallery of statesmen. But the first rung in the ladder gave way under him and, in a rather forlorn attempt to win a by-election at Oldham, a working-class constituency rejected him. "*C'est mon premier échec et je suis décidée à ce que cela sera mon dernier*," exclaimed Sarah Bernhardt after she had practically ridden for a fall at the Comédie. The defeated candidate perhaps registered the same resolution; anyhow, through a long succession of years, Winston Spencer Churchill and real failure seldom met one another.

The long-smouldering hostility of the two Boer Republics in South Africa towards the Suzerain Power burst out into flame on October 11th, 1899, when President Kruger defied Queen Victoria and declared war against the British Empire. Great Britain

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accepted the challenge with a very slender notion of the difficulties before her. Many people regarded the campaign about to open as an opportunity for settling quickly a vexatious quarrel in which so far we had reaped but little honour and the chief topic of conversation on outgoing ships was whether Cape Town would be reached before Kruger was laid by the heels. The early checks British troops suffered hardly disturbed public equanimity; unlimited confidence was placed in Sir Redvers Buller and in what was then considered a large army. "My confidence in the British soldiers," said Lord Salisbury at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, "is only equalled by my confidence in Sir Redvers Buller." That confidence would be reinforced by the news that Winston, who had been appointed War Correspondent to the *Morning Post* and who, moreover, had enjoyed a long heart-to-heart talk with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, would be the shipmate of the G.O.C.-elect on board the *Dunnottar Castle* for the outgoing voyage; there would be full opportunity for discussion of ways and means between the two.

The reports on arrival in Cape Town were dyed black; there had been the surrender of Nicholson's Nek, Ladysmith had been invested, Mafeking and Kimberley were encircled with

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promise of starvation held out to them, the Dutch areas of Cape Colony were a good deal more than disaffected and there were rumours of disaster in Natal. It seemed more than likely that the first heavy fighting would be in Natal, and Winston thought he could best serve his employer, who was also his friend, by going there; Buller's Army Corps could not be ready for at least a month, so he could watch the Natal operations and be back in time for the main movement. This was very sound thinking for a correspondent; the pity was that the General took the same view for himself. With traffic to the Free State interrupted, the only means of reaching Natal was by De Aar Junction and Stormberg to Port Elizabeth, and thence by small mail boat or tug to Durban. The trip was the prelude to a period of duress for which perhaps only the record of St. Paul furnishes a parallel. There were perils by sea (aggravated by agonising sea-sickness), perils by railway (where the train was apt to be blown up and where a two-inch circusot on one occasion loudly asserted itself), there were perils of capture (which was effected by Louis Botha himself), there were perils of escape (which the captive effected with almost superhuman skill though leaving behind him two less "slim" companions), there were perils from Generals

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on both sides, for Sir John French's hostility—however short-lived—was more acute than that shown by Botha; there were perils on the battlefield and even perils on a bicycle; there were hunger and thirst, watching and weariness, and at one moment during the flight from Pretoria something not far remote from nakedness; and to round off the analogy, besides all this, there was that which came upon him daily, the care of the newspaper of which he was a faithful and fearless correspondent. No third act of a Drury Lane melodrama ever included quite so many thrills as punctuated Winston Churchill's flight from the prison on the racecourse at Pretoria to the British Consulate at Lourenzo Marques; no victorious General, no favourite film star, ever received such an ovation as awaited him at Durban; his escape, *à la* Dick Sheppard, from the clutches of our South African opponents and his hair-raising adventures thereafter, hoisted him to the pinnacle of a national hero. The extravagant praise accorded in some quarters to a very daring exploit was not universally echoed, and criticism found expression in more than one of the London papers. Was Mr. Churchill a non-combatant? If so, why was he fully armed and reputed as having performed prodigies of valour? Was he a combatant? If so, when

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captured and placed on the same parole as other officers, why did he disregard an honourable undertaking, and would not his so doing result in harsh treatment being applied to prevent a repetition on the part of other prisoners of the same sort of enterprise? These were some of the lemon drops in the otherwise honeyed cup held up to Winston's lips; anyhow, both enhanced a *réclame*, which soon would become world-wide, and thus the acid may have been no less agreeable to the taste than the sweet. And however the critics might bark at his heels, undeniably the freedom which the fugitive snatched was not to be devoted to any period of leisure which might well have been claimed but to immediate efforts in face of an opponent who was evidently determined that the war should be, for England, as lengthy, as expensive and as exasperating as he could render it.

A commission, by favour of Buller, in the South African Light Horse was now offered and promptly accepted, the more so as the Commander was Julian Byng,¹ a 10th Hussar, familiarly known as "Bungo," and later to lead the Canadians—who thus became known as the "Bing Boys"—in their glorious attack on the Vimy Ridge. A fresh, if brief, chapter of

¹ Later Viscount Byng of Vimy.

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events was to be opened and was to be recorded in minute detail. Winston's memory was as prodigious as his pen—or pencil—was prolific. The Duke of Wellington would draft a memorandum of sixteen pages and copy it with his own hand; Mr. Gladstone's idea of a few lines to his wife on a Sunday evening ran to some three thousand words of closely argued matter; Lord Curzon's quill pen covered reams of cream-laid stationery. But all this was done in undisturbed atmosphere and shrinks before Winston's ability to remember every incident of every adventure, as well as the passing thoughts which accompanied them, and to commit the whole thing to paper after no brief interval of time. Viewed in the light even of the last War, the Boer campaign has been sometimes alluded to as a picnic, but it was no picnic where the days were often uncomfortably hot, the nights piercingly cold—especially when a blanket had to be shared with a senior officer—and when the bivouac was often rendered unrestful by pouring rain. There were to be many ups and downs, often more downs than ups; there was to be the tragedy—all futile and infructuous attacks are veined with tragedy—of Spion Kop; there was the reconnaissance from Hussar Hill, when his brother, Colonel John Churchill, was wounded by his side;

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there was another, and once more an abortive, attempt to relieve Ladysmith; there was the assault on Pieter's Hill where the Irish Brigade were seen to suffer so cruelly; but, on the first morning of March, there was to be, under Dundonald¹ and Birdwood,² the glorious gallop into the beleaguered town and the greetings from Hamilton, Rawlinson,³ Hedworth Lambton and White himself. "Why do you like this sort of thing? You have nothing to get out of it now that you have left the army," was the puzzled query of a "professional soldier." "Because I want to be the first Chancellor of the Exchequer to have a row of medals on my breast," was the prompt and prophetic reply.

The Commission in the South African Light Horse was now to be exchanged for journalistic duties; the *Morning Post*, however, while publishing the messages of its Special Correspondent, disclaimed his views which, inspired by real vision and understanding, he was advocating as to eventual indulgence for splendid, if misguided, patriots.

The High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner,⁴ listened apparently with entire sympathy to

¹ Earl of Dundonald.

² Later Field Marshal Lord Birdwood.

³ Later Lord Rawlinson, C.-in-C. India.

⁴ Created Lord Milner, 1911.

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Winston's arguments; unfortunately, he seems to have altered his mind as the war dragged wearily on, and when it came to the agreement of peace terms it was the British Statesman who was disposed for the sternest measures while the great British Soldier stood firm for reconciliation.

The share in the move to Pretoria, preceded by an episode when the tragic fate of the Prince Imperial was only just avoided, was only secured after opposition from high quarters. French was definitely hostile, Kitchener was quite erroneously supposed to have resented, whereas he greatly admired, *The River War*; Lord Roberts, a profoundly religious man, was aggrieved by remarks which Winston—whose theology was admittedly nebulous—had passed on one of the Army chaplain's sermons. But the War Correspondent was allowed to accompany Ian Hamilton's fine flank march, to be present when the keys of Johannesburg were handed over and to make his jubilant way to the Pretoria prison whose bars had been unable to hold him.

After the June battle of Diamond Hill Winston decided to return home; from the War Correspondent's angle he was probably right. There might be no more large scale battles, no

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spectacular successes; operations in the field might arouse but scant enthusiasm; there would be no more striking achievements, no more Paardebergs or Mafekings; the fizz and fun of war would quickly evaporate. It was time to get back and prepare for the political arena.

The return to England was quickly followed, as was shrewdly anticipated, by a dissolution of Parliament and a General Election, the result of which was never in doubt. The khaki election of October, 1900, had much the same character as the Lloyd George appeal to the country no less cleverly engineered eighteen years later. To vote for any other than a follower of Lord Salisbury and to be other than a disciple of Mr. Chamberlain was akin to treason. Mr. Lloyd George, for opposing the war on a political platform, had to be smuggled through a side door disguised as a policeman. A clergyman who innocently, and accurately, alluded to Joseph Chamberlain as a Unitarian was denounced, by a layman who was a little vague about orthodoxy, as a pro-Boer. Oldham, however, was still a tough nut to crack for a Conservative, but Winston set his teeth to it and "got home". Mr. Chamberlain came himself to speak for him; everything the Unionists could do to promote his candidature

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was done, but it was the buoyant nature, the indomitable will, which eventually deprived Mr. Runciman of the second place at the Polls and set "Randolph's son" on the road to show how largely "Randolph's son" was able to exceed in statecraft Randolph himself.

He was only twenty-six in years but in everything else he was more than twice that age; he had packed his mind, but in so orderly a fashion that he saw things in their true proportions and accepted at no more than their right value the flowers of flattery which were strewn on him. The Prime Minister was prompt with hearty congratulations; Mr. Balfour summoned him to Manchester to address jointly with himself a mass meeting and to wind up a Conservative campaign; Mr. Chamberlain believed, quite mistakenly, that he might have here a tariff reform recruit; he invited the new M.P. to Highbury and from under the bedclothes, being indisposed, treated him to a lengthy allocution and a bottle of '34 port wine. Party managers clamoured for his help, mass meetings acclaimed him; he was certainly the young man of the moment and was too clever not to be conscious that he was marked out to be a man of the future. But then, as thereafter, he kept his head; one has often thought that when praise has been

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lavished on him he has remembered Dr. Lidden's famous dictum that "The applause of all except really good men is the precise measure of their possible hostility."

"*Les beaux esprits se rencontrent*" is more than a half truth and at this juncture two close friends, either by accident or design, were well chosen. Lord Balcarres¹ could boast a culture (an odious word for which there is no synonym) to be reflected in his every word and action; literature and art were an open book for him and he was precisely the companion to fill up some of the gaps which Circumstance had left in a life hitherto of ceaseless activity.

Hugh Cecil was of a different mould, though equally valuable alike to encourage and to restrain; his was the inherited, and insistent, sense of right and wrong. He might be liable, as anyone else, to an error of judgment, but at no juncture could he swerve by a hair's-breadth from the line of conduct which seemed the right path to take; and this without the slightest priggishness and with a very real *joie de vivre*. Is it any wonder that on the happiest morning of Winston's life he chose "Linky" to stand by his side while he plighted his troth?

And the money was—or would be—all right.

¹ Later Earl of Crawford.

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Not then or at any time did Winston write or speak with his banker's balance uppermost in his thoughts, but it was gratifying to know that the sales of his books, added to his *Morning Post* fees, had secured for him upwards of £4,000; and there was in view the rich field of lectures both in England and America which he would traverse and exploit. His subject was himself, but so skilfully did he unfold his story on both sides of the Atlantic that even Chicago, after an initial display of Irish-fed opposition, yielded to imperturbable good temper and ingrained sense of humour. The first of his meetings in London was presided over by Lord Wolseley, who had just completed his *Marlborough*, and was eager to hear anything a Churchill might have to say; in New York Mark Twain himself took the chair; in the Ulster Hall the courtly Old Victorian, Lord Dufferin, introduced the lecturer as one enjoying already a military experience of which few general "orficers" could boast. In fact, a perfect *macédoine* of notabilities contributed their presence and support to tours as exhausting as they were profitable. Adelina Patti always insisted that every shilling of her contracts should be deposited at Rothschild's before she stirred a foot or sang a note. Winston did not go so far as this, but he gave the

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£10,000 he had now amassed into the hands of his father's friend, Sir Ernest Cassel, with wide instructions to invest the money as the astute financier might think best. It was not Cassel's fault that year by year the cost of living caused a young politician—who liked the good things of life as well as any of his fellows—to eat up, from time to time, several mouthfuls of his capital.

“Randolph's son” was now to fling himself, like his father, into politics—for a time into Party politics—with all the thoroughness which was his hallmark. He stumped and spoke and stumped and spoke again. Lord Rosebery once said that the reason why Lord Randolph's career fell short of full success was because he found himself, not by choice but by heritage, in the wrong party; Winston was determined to give both parties a chance and three years would hardly pass before he would be seen crossing the floor of the House; it was a movement induced by honest if rather belated conviction and not because he saw that the Conservative ship of state was likely soon to founder. He was always ready to battle but not always—if indeed ever—on purely party lines; his sense of patriotism was acute and if it sometimes led him astray and even landed him for a moment in a false position, his country

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meant at all times infinitely more to him than his constituency.

He was soon to show himself restive in Conservative harness. Sir William Harcourt was writing to his son of a shadow third party "inspired, I believe, by Winston Churchill with a view to oversetting the Government. I fancy," he added, "Lord Rosebery is cultivating that young gentleman a good deal; the want of judgment in the fellow is obvious, but there is a great deal of fineness in his oratory."

"That is the way to lose seats," murmured George Wyndham, when the newly-joined Member said bluntly in the House of Commons that if he were a Boer he hoped he would be fighting in the field. The first actual parting of the ways occurred over Mr. Broderick's¹ proposal to create six new Army Corps, three of which would be always ready for active service. The Member for Oldham tabled an amendment in which he protested against the continued growth of military expenditure. Twelve years later he would be viewing with entire approval the raising of seventy divisions, all of them to be not only ready but fully equipped, for service in the field. The amendment had to go into the wastepaper basket because the protest of Mr. Asquith, which ran

¹ Secretary of State for War, afterwards First Earl of Midleton.

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along the same lines, had of course pride of place. But the young Member's contribution to the debate aroused something like a furore. Lord Randolph, before delivering his great oration, would shut himself up for two days; he would then write out in full all he had to say and commit it to memory, but his sense of drama sufficed to enable him to deliver the speech as if *ex tempore*. Whether Winston on this momentous occasion observed the same method is unknown; anyhow, every point was a thrust, every phrase polished till it glittered, every argument based on knowledge which was entirely sound, however rapidly acquired. He was determined to score a signal success, the more so because on one occasion he had—perhaps for the only time in his life—lost his nerve and must sit down with an unfinished sentence on his lips and a husky apology to the Speaker. The Broderick proposals were doomed from the start, but the hearty kicks which some of the so-called "Hugligans" bestowed on him made their end as painful as it was decisive.

He now began to ride for a fall, or anyhow a fall from Tory favour. Seventy years earlier the man who was to be the great Liberal Statesman for all time was alluded to as the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories;

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now a young Tory was whispered about as the rising hope of the Liberals, a prophecy which he sealed when concluding a speech at Halifax with "Thank God for the Liberal Party." But the moment was not quite, though very nearly, ripe, and brushing aside a vote of no confidence from his constituents he continued to sit solidly behind the Treasury Bench, a posture which so exasperated the Ministerialists that one evening they walked out in a body when he began to speak.

The end was to come over fiscal reforms. The great apostle of Free Food, Mr. Richard Cobden, is reputed to have said that to ensure success three things are necessary: a good cause, strenuous advocacy, and the opposition of *The Times* newspaper. Whether or no Winston endorsed this dictum, anyhow in May, 1904, when addressing a meeting in the Free Trade Hall in north-west Manchester, where a seat was being tendered to him, he pronounced himself as an out-and-out follower of Cobden. A fortnight later he found himself sitting side by side with Mr. Lloyd George; it was a partnership which storm and stress would fail to dissolve and where the best qualities of both fiery patriots would be brought into high relief. To make a cast back, those of us who have passed the age limit prescribed by the Psalmist

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may ask ourselves how Lord Randolph would have worked in the Council Chamber with Sir Charles Dilke as his colleague.

The translation was fortunately, but not deliberately, timed. When at the Vereeniging Peace Conference in 1902, the obduracy of Lord Milner threatened a deadlock, Kitchener took General Smuts aside and whispered to him that surely within three years a Liberal Government would be in office and would as surely grant South Africa a Constitution. "That," said Smuts afterwards, "settled the matter. We went back to our talk, concluded arrangements, and the war came to an end." The Soldier, who knew nothing of politics, was not far out; in November, 1905, Mr. Balfour, who for some time had been balancing himself on a tight-rope between Tariff Reform and Free Trade—a tight-rope from which he had been nearly jerked off by the secession of the Duke of Devonshire—craved an audience of King Edward and handed in his resignation.

Just ten years earlier the Unionists had swept the Board; the General Election of January, 1906, was what the French picturesquely describe as "*La réponse du Berger à le Bergère*", and in N.W. Manchester the Liberal candidate secured so signal a victory as even to surprise himself. The news reporter for whom Winston

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had long been precious “copy” drew a skilful picture of him in his committee-room biting a pencil and, for once, almost unable to voice his feelings.

Just as in 1900 a vote given to a Liberal was a vote given to the enemy, so now a vote given to a Protectionist was to impoverish—so it was claimed—the working man’s breakfast table. But that N.W. Manchester should turn Liberal was indeed a turn-up. “Doubtful,” said Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to his Chief Whip, “if our friend Winston, with all the cleverness and variety of his speeches, is quite the sort of man to capture the quiet non-Party voter who went for Mr. Houldsworth because of his solidity, stolidity and eminent respectability. Whatever Winston’s eminent respectability as regards the two former qualities, he certainly fell behind the estimable brewer who then held the seat. But the vivacity, the aliveness, the electricity with which he was surcharged—an electricity which flashed and sparkled and tingled and sometimes scorched—took the constituency by storm; to the young revolutionary aristocrat N.W. Manchester, with middle-class oozing out of its pores, surrendered at discretion.

The two platform cries—Tariff Reform and Chinese Labour in the South African Mines—

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had been used for all, and rather more, than they were worth; the Unionist defeat was overwhelming and twelve occupants of the Front Bench must ruefully follow their leader into temporary, but humiliating, exile.

To the Prime Minister-elect occurred that happy thought of appointing Winston Under Secretary for the Colonies. His chief would be Lord Elgin, a Balliol scholar and a sometime Viceroy of India, a wise and faithful public servant on whose temperament his subordinate would act as a stimulating tonic to be taken, if possible, daily. The appointment was viewed with favour by King Edward on personal, as well as other, grounds; several of Winston's relations were on intimate terms with the Sovereign and his still peerlessly beautiful Consort; thus, so it was thought, it would be possible to check any signs of breaking out on the part of a young Minister who was known to have in very pronounced degree a "will of his own." The offer, which was evidently to lead to further promotion, was readily accepted. "The desire for office," said Mr. Gladstone, "is the desire of ardent minds for a larger space and scope within which to serve the country, and for command of that powerful machinery for information and practice which the Public Departments supply. He would be

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a very bad Minister indeed who does not do ten times the good to the country that he would do out of office, because he has hopes and opportunities which multiply twentyfold, as by a system of wheels and pulleys, his power for doing it." Here was a pious, if rather pompous statement which Winston would wholly endorse, even if he rendered it in rather less turgid terms; he loved power, and with every successive year and event his love for it would grow; he could not do other than realise his fitness to wield authority and he has wielded it with the welfare of his country steadily in view.

"If anything annoys me more than another it is our Cape affairs, where every day brings forward a new blunder of Twitters.¹ We sent out Shepstone for Twitters' sake and he has managed to quarrel with English, Dutch and Zulus; now he has to be recalled but not, I fear, before he has brought on a new war. Froude cost us a million; this will be much worse." So wrote Lord Beaconsfield in September, 1878; two years later came the recall of Sir Bartle Frere and it is fair to say that few Continents

¹ The Colonial Secretary, the third Earl of Carnarvon, who wrote then to the Queen that Confederation recommends itself on so many grounds that he hoped to bring into union the two Dutch states and restore them to the crown. Mr. Disraeli had little care for Colonial interests and somewhat infected the Sovereign with his indifference.

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have tasted of more trouble and turmoil than fell to a disintegrated South Africa in the thirty years succeeding that deplorable decision of Mr. Gladstone. Yet within those thirty years a restless and rebellious dependent was to be transformed into a steadfast and trusted friend, and for the Federation chillily contemplated by a Liberal Cabinet in 1880 there was to be substituted, under a bolder Government of the same colour, the Act of Union of 1909.

“Your object,” Bartle Frere had said when Joubert and the crafty Kruger, no less than the bloodthirsty Cetewayo had to be reckoned with, “is not conquest but supremacy to Delagoa Bay.” Even in mid-campaign Winston looking far ahead had never thought that the main object was the bare conquest of the Boers in the field, but rather absorption of a free white people, and the transfusion of their spirit, into the British common weal. His main purpose now was to grant the people of South Africa a Liberal Constitution under the British Crown, to banish for ever any genuine grievances and to abolish defects of administration which had existed even before the annexation rather abruptly carried out by Sir Theophilus Shepstone.

The idea of a responsible Constitution was

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distasteful to Lord Milner, who seemed to consider that South Africa had been indulged with quite enough sugar; rightly or wrongly, he was to draw upon himself a direct vote of censure on his South African administration. The motion was negative, but an amendment moved in very forcible terms by the Under Secretary met with a large majority. Mr. Asquith wrote to the King that he was anxious to cool Party fever, but the heat had been induced by Milner's intemperate words in the House of Lords. The King disagreed. "I cannot consider," he wrote from Biarritz, "that Lord Milner's speech was intemperate; if it was, what were Mr. Winston Churchill's speeches in the House of Commons?" And to Lady Londonderry: "I share your views as to certain proceedings in the House of Commons; the conduct of a certain relation of yours is simply scandalous." As a matter of fact, the King resented the attack on Lord Milner largely because it recalled to him the case of his friend, Sir Bartle Frere, whose rule in South Africa had been equally impugned. But right through the unhappy Milner controversy, and indeed in all that affected South Africa at the time, King Edward's chief informant other than Lord Selborne himself, was the Colonial Under Secretary. Even when on holiday at

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Deauville, in the intervals of bathing, golf and baccarat, Winston wrote dealing exhaustively with the advantages of full responsible Government as compared with Alfred Lyttelton's¹ proposals of half and half.

The King, in reply, propounded the question as to whether the contemplated measures would have the effect of increasing immigrants from England or the reverse. At the end of a long dictated letter the King added in his own hand: "His Majesty is glad to see you are becoming a reliable Minister and above all a serious Politician, which can only be attained by putting country before party."

By return of courier went a letter of thirteen quarto pages, the tenor of which was to prove that change from a Crown Colony to responsible Government would be all to the good for British immigrants. It was a clearly as well as closely argued document, but perhaps a little indigestible for a monarch who was just then taking a strenuous course of Marienbad waters. But if this allocution provoked no reply further letters were evidently to raise the writer still higher in the King's friendship and favour; from Biarritz the following spring he was writing to Lady Londonderry: "Sir J. Fisher and Winston Churchill arrived here a few days

¹ Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, Colonial Secretary.

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ago and they are most amusing together; I call them the chatterers."

Official duties did not preclude the acceptance of a cordial invitation from the Kaiser to witness German manœuvres in 1906; the Kaiser was perhaps anxious to ask why Winston, when dealing with South Africa, had been utterly opposed to the theory, just then laid down by the German Staff that the total intellectual and material resources of an enemy's state must be destroyed—a prescription which, anyhow, has lately been faithfully followed.

The Duke of Connaught was a fellow guest of the Emperor. The Emperor sought to open his uncle's eyes with an Army Corps—of which 50 per cent were reservists—mobilised to fight two Corps on a peace footing. The turn-out was superb, the march past of the infantry beyond praise, but the two ex-Hussars were less impressed with the Cavalry. Shock action with little variation was the order of the day, the reconnoitring seemed imperfect, and they were rather surprised to see Divisional Cavalry being used up as orderlies and for other ornamental duties instead of fulfilling their peculiar task to protect the Division from surprise attacks. The mode of charging also rather puzzled them; the German mounted men had been trained to ride right over the lines of the

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infantry, the latter being instructed to lie still and take their chance of injuries, which were not infrequent. Here perhaps was a rehearsal of the method employed when German Cavalry were exchanged for monster German tanks and when wretched French and Belgian refugees were substituted for German infantry.

II

“I do not think that a braver gentleman,
More active valiant or more valiant young,
More daring or more bold is now alive.”

WHAT Prince Henry said about Hotspur Percy is precisely what Winston would think about Louis Botha, who seemed to sum up in himself all that was good and all that was gallant—and how much there was—in the Transvaal patriot. Botha had been his captor, but not perhaps since the days of Hubert and Prince Arthur had gaoler and gaoled entertained such feelings of friendship for one another.

There was to come an opportunity of doing a service to his Sovereign and his friend. Botha, in 1907, proposed to acquire the Cullinan Diamond for presentation to King Edward in token of the loyalty of the Transvaal people

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and of their appreciation of the grant of self-government. The Legislative Assembly agreed, and Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner, entirely approved and Botha told both the Prince of Wales and the Under Colonial Secretary how anxious he was from the South African point of view that the great jewel should pass into the King's possession. A strenuous, if subterranean, controversy, however, arose as to the desirability of accepting the gift; the Cabinet was tepid on the subject; the Prime Minister rather timidly suggested that the matter should be left to the King's judgment, which was "so good in matters of this sort"; Lord Esher, always anxious to have his say, strongly opposed the opinion of Lord Selborne, who might be thought to know something about the matter, and sneeringly suggested that the gem would only glorify Mr. Cullinan, the director of the Premier Mine. The Prince of Wales and Winston were equally eager that the King should do nothing which might offend his subjects in South Africa; the King, who was at Biarritz, hesitated for a few days, but a private letter from his son and a masterly minute on the subject from Winston fortified a final dispatch from Selborne and the King, who placed confidence in all three of them, telegraphed that he would accept the

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diamond as soon as Botha officially offered it.

Then an astute Under Secretary, who was given by his Chief a very free hand, hinted to the King that he would do well to see Sir Richard Solomon, the acting Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal; Sir Richard was then on a visit to England and well up in the running to be the first Prime Minister in the new Transvaal Government. Solomon was to be defeated in the South African General Election by the Boer Party, but he had been invited to join the birthday party at Sandringham; and he was to be invited again when, as Agent-General, it fell to him to present the Cullinan Diamond. The King frankly expressed himself as grateful to Winston for a timely suggestion; it was adopted without hesitation and proved to be by no means unuseful.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's tenure of office was altogether honourable but all too short; he was a sick man when he was called on to form a Government; the death of his wife, whom he adored, supervened, and in April, 1908, a few weeks before his own death, he surrendered his Seals to the King, who was then at Biarritz and to whom he had become attached by bonds of mutual liking and friendship. As a matter of fact the King had found

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the members of the Liberal Government more to his liking than was anticipated. Edward VII had always been without political bias; Mr. Gladstone meant more to him than Lord Beaconsfield; at the Mayor's Banquet in Birmingham he won over the then Radical Member, Joseph Chamberlain, by means of his charm and a gift of one of his mammoth cigars; Sir Charles Dilke's opposition to the Royal grants had only stimulated him to make that rebellious personage his friend and to commit him by personal request to the favour of Prince Bismarck. Now Sir Edward Grey was, of course, the son of one of the earliest members of his household, Mr. Haldane immediately, and apparently without effort, made a most favourable impression; Mr. Morley was most helpful in keeping him in touch with the perfect accord which existed between the new Viceroy, Lord Minto, and the Commander-in-Chief; he quickly saw that Mr. Asquith had some of the elements of real greatness and he hoped—he could only hope—that Mr. Lloyd George's fiery impulses would be kept under control. Disregarding murmurs that it was unconstitutional for a new Prime Minister to kiss hands anywhere else than in the Sovereign's Dominions, the Sovereign summoned Mr. Asquith to his side and bade him

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carry on to the very best of his ability; there would certainly be a difficult, and very likely a dangerous, course to steer. In the shuffle of places which necessarily ensued, Mr. Lloyd George took over the new Premier's almost completed Budget, Mr. Runciman was to preside over Education and the Under Secretary of the Colonies was promoted to be President of the Board of Trade with a seat in the Cabinet. For the new tenant the post had special interest in that it had been occupied by his father with great advantage. In the next twenty years he was destined, in various posts, to be in and out and in and out again of that august conclave, so undefined in origin and so varying in value.

The year was to provide an even more felicitous occasion. Winston Spencer Churchill was to marry and, as he himself said, to live happily ever afterwards; truly there was to be a union of unalloyed happiness and unstinted love. Those who have lived close to Winston Churchill have been often heard to say that despite his firm and convinced attitude towards life in general there dwells, however deep down, a great fountain of tenderness. His choice was the daughter of Captain Henry Hozier, who had served in the 2nd Life Guards, was to be the most competent Secretary of

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Lloyd's, and as Foreign Office Messenger had carried from the Prince of Wales to the Crown Prince of Prussia at Versailles a letter which gave rise to rather foolish adverse comment. The Prince had been accused (among others by Queen Victoria, who just then wrote "A powerful Germany can never be dangerous to England but just the reverse") of pro-French feeling in the Franco-German War; now an extreme pro-French party in England reproached him for sending, through Captain Hozier, a perfectly colourless message to his brother-in-law. On her mother's side the future Mrs. Churchill could always boast of the bluest Scottish blood and she had for her uncle the gallant Lord Airlie, who fell at Diamond Hill while leading a charge of his 12th Lancers, any one of whom would willingly have given his life to save that of the Colonel they all worshipped. "Moderate your language, please," were the last words on his lips when the sergeant-major at his side, hot in the excitement of the charge, was using terms reminiscent of his early trooper days.

The wives of public men must play a substantial, if silent, part in making or marring their husbands' careers; these ladies are not always so discreet as was Mrs. Buck in fiction and Mrs. Gladstone in fact; to many of them

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the question may be asked whether they will know everything and say nothing or know nothing and talk as they please. It is not within public knowledge whether to Mrs. Churchill this question was ever put, but at any rate no word can be traced to her lips other than what is wholly discreet, opportune and kind. Never for a moment has she entangled herself in any of the political labyrinths which beset official highways, but has trod her own constantly beneficent road with tireless energy and apparently with entire enjoyment.

The beginning of 1908 had been marked by a great hubbub when it was learnt that Lord Tweedmouth (Winston's uncle by marriage) had, as First Lord of the Admiralty, been in correspondence with the Kaiser on naval matters. In the House of Lords, Lord Tweedmouth defended the letters as "Private" to exact the retort that they had the same relation to secrecy as a private view of the Academy. As a result, Lord Tweedmouth, who was soon to be struck down by cerebral fever, yielded his office to Mr. McKenna and a few weeks later Lord Fisher, then First Sea Lord, was writing in triumphant tones that all the Lords of the Admiralty had agreed to a programme for the next year which included the construction of four, and possibly six, ships

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of the dreadnought class. In the last months there had been formed a close pact between the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, and the President of the Board of Trade. The former was never to be on easy terms with Edward VII, the latter was now to incur the Sovereign's high displeasure for a speech at Swansea on the occasion of a miners' demonstration. The orator deplored Lord Cromer's recent warnings against German menace; he entirely repudiated the bare idea that war with Germany was inevitable, and insisted that it was never worth while fighting for the sake of trade. The status of the Colonies and India, he declared, would remain unchanged even in the event of a British defeat and there was really nothing to fight for except tropical plantations and scattered coaling stations. "Germany," he exclaimed, "had nothing to fight about, no prize to fight for, no place to fight in, and as a nation we rejoiced in everything bringing good to that strong, patient, industrious German people."

If, which is doubtful, there was anyone in his audience with any knowledge of Queen Victoria the speaker's words must have sounded as an echo of Victoria's entreaty to the Duke of Coburg that he would prevent any weakening of Prussia, "Our dear angel Albert always

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regarded a strong Prussia as a necessity, for which therefore it is a sacred duty for me to work."

While Winston was talking Lloyd George was touring Germany. Though, as he protested, "almost a teetotaller," he drank glasses of foaming beer with the Imperial Chancellor, he was entertained at the Zoological Gardens, and shown the wreck of a Zeppelin; he studied, and determined to imitate, the German system of national insurance and he told a representative of the Austrian *Neue Freie Presse* that nothing he yearned for more than an Anglo-German understanding; as usual, for sheer intelligence, a sort of quick, if spurious, sympathy and facility to attract Mr. Lloyd George won all the way. But the King was, in his own words, "much annoyed with Lloyd George and Winston Churchill for their intrusion into provinces which were not their own"; he told the Prime Minister he was much displeased, more especially with Mr. Lloyd George, whose utterances he warmly deprecated. Sir Edward Grey, as Foreign Minister, administered, on the King's behalf, a stern rebuke to the peccant Ministers and told Winston that not only was it undesirable to discuss foreign politics when addressing constituencies but that some of his statements were

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not wholly accurate; the former sentiment was indisputable, but he would be a bold man indeed to challenge at any time or on any point Winston Spencer Churchill's accuracy.

So long as his Minister stuck to his own job he had the King's entire approval and never more so than when, in September, he issued a carefully worded Memorandum which went a long way to heal Labour troubles just then rife, a serious dispute having broken out between masters and men in the cotton spinners' trade. Here Winston could most usefully exercise his gift on seeing both sides of an argument and in being able to adjust exactly the balance; Mr. Balfour, it was always said, saw both sides so clearly and so indifferently that he could with difficulty be persuaded to give an opinion on any disputed point.

Before the close of 1909 the King, for the second time in his reign, dissolved Parliament; the two political parties were now pitted against one another in a campaign *à l'outrance*. Mr. Lloyd George in a succession of vehement speeches declared the issue to be the supremacy of the House of Lords, which he maintained, was nothing else than a branch of the Tory organisation; not for a moment would he be a member of a Liberal Government unless the Commons could carry bills in a single Parlia-

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ment with, or without, the imprimatur of the Lords. Churchill was equally active, equally alert, but he remembered he was a statesman even more than a party politician, and the Prime Minister could write to Lord Knollys,¹

“I hope you have noticed the moderation of tone and the absence of personalities and bad taste—as well as the conspicuous ability—which have characterised Winston Churchill’s campaign in Lancashire.”

But once more a speech, delivered at Manchester, greatly perturbed a very constitutional Sovereign; he deputed his Equerry to write to the Lord Chamberlain, Lord Althorpe, that the “somewhat nebulous allusions in Winston Churchill’s speech seemed to have received different interpretations, but it has been most distasteful to the King to find speeches attributing various opinions to His Majesty.” The Lord Chamberlain—who was Winston’s relative—was asked to tell the Prime Minister privately that the King hoped Cabinet Ministers would never mention His Majesty’s name in their speeches or refer to him in their discussions.

In the spring of 1909 Mr. McKenna, who might have been thought to know more about

¹ The King’s Private Secretary, and close friend of Lord Randolph.

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banking than about battleships, was stirred up by his Sea Lords to demand an immediate construction of the contemplated dreadnoughts. The peg on which he hung his plea was the rapid growth of the German Fleet and its expansion under the new German Naval law, an expansion, which, incidentally, was settled on just as the Kaiser was bidding the King good-bye after a so-called, friendly visit to Windsor. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade shook their heads; they were sceptical about any immediate danger, and, fortified by facts and figures, they were emphatic that four dreadnoughts would be ample provision; any further expenditure, they thought, would be an outrage on economy.¹ "It was natural," says Macaulay "that Pitt and Grenville, being such as they were, should take different views of the situation. Pitt could see nothing but the trophies, Grenville saw nothing but the bill."

¹ Nine years earlier Lord Salisbury was writing to Queen Victoria, "the real serious deficiency is the want of big guns. Every effort is being made to complete them but they take a very long time, from one to two or even three years to make. The delay is partly due to the commencement of them having been delayed too long in the past, partly to an unfortunate blunder as to the steel lining committed by the Ordnance Committee which contains the best experts in the country. The difficulty of forcing anything to go fast under a Parliamentary Constitution is more than Your Majesty can imagine. The allegations of Lord Wolseley that London is open to attack are being carefully examined: and efforts will be made to supply any existing deficiencies of organisation."

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It was not unnatural that Mr. McKenna and Mr. Churchill should at different periods, and from different angles, hold divergent views. Two years later Churchill would reserve nothing, neglect nothing, overlook nothing, if he could by any means secure victory for the British Navy. Now he was obsessed with the idea of what the British taxpayer would have, perhaps rather reluctantly, to contribute. The British taxpayer, an easy-going, peace-loving person, is apt to grumble at any outlay on armaments until the enemy is at the gate; then he is more than ready to disgorge without murmur or dissent. Perhaps the Chancellor of the Exchequer is apt to forget that fact when he hugs himself with the idea that a popular budget is the main annual consideration.

The promotion of the President of the Board of Trade to be Home Secretary was about the last appointment King Edward was to approve.

The new office, of course, brought him into even closer touch with his Sovereign, and Sovereign and subject had many friends, both English and American, and many interests in common. Of pictures, of which Winston knew already a good deal, King Edward knew very little; music was a topic familiar to them both, and in any music talk Queen Alexandra would eagerly join. Lady Randolph Churchill as an

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amateur and Mademoiselle Janotha as a professional, were the two friends with whom she would study the piano for hours together. And the son was never happier than when his mother was the theme of kindly conversation. "Randolph's son" too had inherited a gift which greatly attracted his master; King Edward would often speak of the reports of the Parliamentary debates he received from the Home Secretary; "good spirited letters" he described them and with a "Disraelian touch" which he greatly relished.

Then a cold, rather imprudently contracted at Sandringham on the last day of April, was to set an end to a beneficent life and a wise reign. Whether as Prince of Wales or as King, to Winston Churchill he had always been a good friend, the truer perhaps because he had never been backward to lay his finger on faults though always equally ready to make all allowances and to "make up." And "Randolph's son" would remember that more than once an Heir Apparent had dared the Sovereign's anger in order to defend Randolph's cause. The Reign of Edward VII saw the total abandonment of long-standing British isolation; he had chased the frowns from the foreheads of all the rulers in Europe, except those of the Central Powers, and had

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won for himself the confidence and affection of all the foreign Courts; his heart and hand had been busy with agreements not only with France and Russia—where he had overcome with apparent ease the animosity of the one and the hesitancy of the other—but also with Spain, Portugal, the Scandinavian countries and Afghanistan; he had forged a bond with Japan which Mr. Balfour's delicate fingers were not too happily employed in severing; he had brought the Sultan of Muscat and other minor Asiatic and African potentates to his side, and his bold step in writing to congratulate President Roosevelt on his election paved the path for mutual relations of practical value. This was apparently the outlook abroad, for a rising statesman in 1910; how changed, and darkened, the picture thirty years later, when the same statesman was to do homage as his Sovereign's chief adviser.

It is a curious fact that the more “sober and righteous” be the life of a public man the more certain it is that some malcontent folk will try to attach to him some special failing of morals or methods. The immortal hero of Khartum—so ran an odious whisper—was addicted to the brandy bottle; Mr. Gladstone, so it was vulgarly suggested, pursued paths associated with a *vieux marcheur*; of a famous statesman it

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was even murmured that when he dined out he was apt to purloin the silver spoons. No scoundrel, however irresponsible, could ever aim any dart at Winston Churchill's domestic life; his home was, as it always will be, the sum and centre of his personal happiness and the safeguard of his moral character. But just now his unpopularity as a politician was heavily underlined. Few men in the last fifty years have been approached with so much popular homage as at times has fallen to him. Few men have been assailed as he was, anyhow for a brief period, with so much political hate.

Tories, his sometime friends, continued to harp on a political *volte face* and sneer at it as sheer "ratting." Jealousy of a man so largely in the public gaze was mated to bewilderment at his rapid rise and brought forth some very sour fruit in the form of slander.¹ One or two charges against public life were rightly denounced, the tittle-tattle was brushed contemptuously aside and in many cases a keen sense of humour prevented an intended wound from rankling.

¹ In the King's Bench Division, in an undefended action for libel brought by the Home Secretary against a certain Mr. Spencer, a judgment was promptly entered for the plaintiff, who, having been anxious not to impoverish a man of straw, asked for only nominal damages on the understanding that the rather silly slander would not be repeated.

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This last appointment did not escape criticism; the Home Office had generally been offered to men of more matured years: Lord Crosse, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Henry Matthews, and even Mr. Asquith, had all more than passed the meridian of life before taking over a duty in which was inherent something of a judicial character. Would a young man of thirty-six, so ran the query, whose youth had been largely spent outside England, be adapted to perform tasks which require a keen and practised insight into domestic affairs? The question was a fair one; the answer was to prove wholly satisfactory. The Home Secretary—so runs a rather pompous definition—is responsible for the maintenance of the King's Peace and through him the Sovereign exercises the prerogative of mercy. Here was rather a ticklish point, as more than once Queen Victoria had been disposed, perhaps justly, to sternness while the Home Secretary had respectfully insisted on mercy. On this matter Winston would always agree with George V and his gracious Queen Mary that whenever leniency was possible it should always be exercised. And, his busy life notwithstanding, he had secured knowledge of criminal justice, police and prisons (the last at first hand), which rather startled the functionaries with

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whom he had to deal. Perhaps the item on his programme which he liked best was to look after the health and safety of men and women engaged in work where some danger was involved. Not only was he able to "carry on" with perfect smoothness but to institute more than one reform of permanent value. It so happened just then there was being performed a play to which Galsworthy had given in irony the title of *Justice*. The Home Secretary, always a frequent playgoer, saw it and was largely moved by some of the scenes; he was determined that "something should be done about it." He may have heard that Queen Alexandra, always his mother's close friend, had desired ten pounds to be sent to a man who had addressed to her a pathetic begging letter; on enquiry it was found that the petitioner was most unsatisfactory and at the moment was actually in prison. "Send the poor man the money," the Queen enjoined her Treasurer, "he will need it when he comes out." The Home Secretary may not have gone quite so far as this with regard to convicted offenders but he saw to it that in prison solitary confinement should be reduced to its lowest point, that the ticket-of-leave should be abolished and that lectures, concerts and other forms of recreation should be set afoot to relieve the utter dreari-

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ness of captivity and to remind the prisoner of what the future might hold for him.

The Home Secretary had inaugurated his new duties with a piece of wise advice which had been wisely followed. Westminster Cathedral was to be consecrated on June 10th and the ceremony was to include a Procession of the Holy Sacrament; eighteen months earlier a similar Procession, associated with the Eucharistic Congress, had been forbidden; there had been some fear of a disturbance as the Public Adoration of the Host had been announced as an act of reparation for the Reformation. The refusal had given great offence to many of the King's Roman Catholic subjects, old Lord Ripon expressing his indignation by resigning his office of Privy Seal. Winston now, *ex officio*, urged that the Procession should be allowed to circulate round the Cathedral, and thereby give satisfaction to a very large and loyal community. King Edward who had been eager to discontinue an odious and offensive clause in the Coronation Oath, was here a little doubtful. "The King," he wrote direct to his Minister, "fully appreciates Mr. Churchill's opinion as one which will be satisfactory to the Roman Catholic community, but he is bound to respect the prejudices of those who hold contrary views and he would

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like the legal and constitutional aspect of the case to be clearly defined.” The wheels of “legal and constitutional” machinery were set going and the King could be assured that not only would there be no violation of the law but that the Home Office had really no power to prevent the proceedings. The decision, as a matter of fact, greatly relieved the King; apart from his special reverence for sacred things he was always anxious to relieve Roman Catholics of any sort of disability and had indeed lately incurred the reproaches of some specially rabid Protestants by attending the Requiem Mass for the murdered King of Portugal; in this, his last, service to Edward VII, Winston had clearly shown himself a “reliable Minister.”

“La guerra es la verdadera vida del hombre.” This was Garibaldi’s motto and a Home Secretary, and sometime soldier, might well have adopted something like it, for his own. Vivacity and pugnacity are nearly related, and Winston was always disposed for a fight so long as he could claim justice and humanity on his side. On a January morning, in 1911, Sidney Street, Spitalfields, was to be his battleground, two hundred police (City and Metropolitan) and seventeen Scots Guardsmen (with a maxim gun) the force under his command. His opponent was an anarchist from Finland, com-

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monly known as Peter the Painter. A fortnight earlier three police sergeants, when attempting to frustrate a burglary, had been shot dead; their comrades vowed and intended vengeance; Peter, they insisted, must hang, but Fate ordained otherwise. On this 3rd of January some men who were wanted had been tracked to the abode of a Russian seamstress; fifty police closed in on the house, summoned the inhabitants to surrender, and opened proceedings with the minor measure of throwing stones at the windows, to receive in reply a rapid succession of shots. The situation required careful but vigorous handling; reinforcements were sent for and the Home Secretary drove up in a car to see what was going on. He wore a top hat and a fur coat and was, of course, unarmed as Army commanders in the field generally are. That he displayed pluck and sangfroid goes without saying; here his tact was no less irreproachable. He advised, he suggested, he encouraged, but he made no sort of attempt to take charge. The strange conflict raged for over two hours and then suddenly 100, Sidney Street was seen to be alight. The Home Secretary, a Guardsman and an inspector formed a sort of miniature storming party and, with the inspector leading, marched up to the door to kick it down; no sound was

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heard. When the fire engines had done their work the charred bodies of two Russians were found and identified. Peter had vanished and was never seen again. The "Sidney Street affair" formed a fruitful theme—often with the wildest variations—for club corners and ladies' luncheons; a rather sordid story had a useful epilogue: automatics were to be issued to the police for any dangerous duties and an enquiry was instituted as to alien criminals masquerading as political refugees.

Underlying surface struggles in the spring of this Coronation year of 1911 was the swell of the Parliament Bill, a measure to which the Home Secretary was, of course, pledged, although his sympathies were rather of a Party than a personal character. Rumour indeed ran that he aided and abetted his two intimate friends—Mr. F. E. Smith¹ and Lord Winterton—when they gave a fancy dress ball at a West End hotel; here, among the ladies arrayed in every variety of costume from Cleopatra to a ballet girl, and among elderly lords disguised as Tudor Kings, there were to be seen the figures of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, their faces wreathed in smiles. Worse still, one high-spirited young politician was observed with the number 499 attached

¹ Created Earl of Birkenhead 1932.

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to his tinsel coronet, in delicate allusion to the five hundred peers whom the Government was reported to have in view. In a letter to *The Times* newspaper a leading statesman denounced the occasion as a political masquerade, but if it mocked at tradition it had at least the merit of suggesting the good humour which so often characterises so-called political crises; anyhow, also, the aristocratic humorist had been guilty of exaggeration, as not more than two hundred colourless gentlemen would have to present themselves for promotion for the Prime Minister's prospective purpose.

It is a commonplace that the sense of humour so evident in this country—especially in the upper and lower classes—is a national asset of which Germany is wholly void. The costume ball, full of absurd incidents, was witness that the Home Secretary could always—and usefully—see the ridiculous as well as the dark side of a case submitted to him. Nor was he less happy if the joke were turned against himself, provided that in the joke there were nothing unlovely or irreverent.

Then on an August morning, strolling back from the golf links, the Prime Minister asked the Home Secretary if he would like to change places with Mr. McKenna and take over the Admiralty. "Indeed I would," was the simple

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answer, but it meant a good deal more than could be easily unfolded in words. In truth, it was high time for some clear thinking and, if necessary, for some prompt action. The Kaiser's rash act of sending the *Panther* to Agadir as a protest against any French protectorate of Morocco had provoked from Mr. Lloyd George an unexpected, though not unwelcome, retort. "Hands off" had been the burden of a speech indirectly addressed to Germany at a Mansion House dinner. The new First Lord was one of the select school who believed that a trial of strength with a formidable foe was sure to be forced on us and that England might have to strip to the bone if she were to be sure of victory. The hard task laid on him, now was labelled "to put the fleet into a state of instant and constant readiness for war in case we are attacked by Germany"; to accomplish this Winston Churchill enjoyed an advantage which he never sought to exploit but which must have been a source of special strength. He had for his Master a Sailor King. Queen Victoria's pride in her Navy was of course beyond doubt; her interest in it was rather languid and was only aroused at such moments as when the tragedy of the *Victoria* caused her to cancel a State Ball or when, with some heat, she forbade sailors to grow a

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moustache without the accompanying pendant of a beard. King Edward had given equal thought and care to both services but had little technical knowledge of either military or naval tactics. For his son the sea had been for many years his home and seamanship was part of his stock-in-trade. With his accession to the throne he intimated that he was determined to know precisely what was happening—or likely to happen—in the Navy; the Sea Lords were quickly made aware that if they had any novelty to introduce, any modification in existing practice to suggest, they must be prepared with a very clear case before submission for final sanction. If through four and a half years of war George V never crossed the threshold of the War Office he would more than once be seen at the Admiralty studying and understanding the maps and charts brought out for his inspection. The King would always allude with infinite pleasure to his trip in a newly modelled submarine with the Prince of Wales and the First Lord. Now he was to lend to the First Lord elect quick sympathy and unfailing support. Admitted, as his predecessor had not been, to the Inner Cabinet the First Lord's first contribution took shape, curiously enough, in a "Memo on the Military Aspects of the Continental

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Problem"; the document was based on common sense and coloured by a vivid imagination, but some of the War Office wiseacres shook their heads at it. Henry Wilson, then Director of Military Operations, had no use for what he spoke of as a "silly memo,"¹ but then Wilson was also to babble of "Kitchener's shadow armies" and to exhibit his contempt for the Dardanelles expedition with a remark that Germany would gladly provide transports for it as it merely meant a reduction of our strength on the Western Front. The First Lord at once summoned to his side, and to the Council of his inner thoughts, Lord Fisher, who had recently exchanged the post of First Sea Lord for a seat in the Upper House. "Jacky" knew his profession from A to Z, and loved her as his mistress; through many years and in many intimate talks he had taught Winston—whom he found a quick and eager pupil—much about the lore of the sea. He was a sailor through and through; he would cut red tape—if anybody tried to tie him up in it—as cheerfully as he would, and did, defy etiquette by inviting Queen Alexandra to be his partner at a Court

¹ Marshal Foch told the present writer that he had been obliged to decline writing a preface to Henry Wilson's book until certain passages were struck out; one of those ran: "The four idiots then talked, the four idiots being Asquith, Lloyd George, Haldane and Winston Churchill.

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Ball. Winston set himself to do for the Navy much as Wolseley had sought to do for the Army forty years earlier; he was sure that the Blue Water would be the scene of bitter fighting in the future, and perhaps in the near future, and on the high seas the enemy was to be challenged and if possible forced to fight.

As regards First Lords, there are diversities of administrations but, one hopes, the same spirit. Mr. Balfour was so haughtily indifferent to the human side of his office that he allowed the story of the Battle of Jutland to be represented as a defeat and—according to rumour—Churchill, then only a “private” M.P. had to be hurriedly summoned to the Admiralty to draft a communiqué which should set out the true and triumphant tale. Sir Edward Carson stoutly declined to be present at conferences where purely technical subjects were under discussion. “I should know less about the subject than the junior naval officer in the room, and as things would have to be explained to me I should only impede progress.” This was his argument and he would maintain that his duty was to learn the views of the Sea Lords and, if they stood test, to press them in the Cabinet. Winston Churchill based his methods on an entire

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negation of the convention that Generals and Admirals are more competent to deal with the broad issues of a war than abler men in other spheres of life. He conceived himself—as he almost certainly was—"an abler man in another sphere of life" and he thought it behoved him not merely to preside and to decide vital questions—when his wide knowledge must be of incalculable value—but to enter into the innumerable details to deal with which technical knowledge and professional experience might have been thought indispensable. This view naturally was not always accepted. "His courage," wrote Sir Reginald Bacon, "which led him to make important and valuable decisions on civil matters also reacted on his profound belief in his own opinions and made him venturesome in the extreme in enforcing his own views. His indomitable energy caused him to meddle in innumerable details that were infinitely better left to the technical officers who had the practical experience necessary to deal with them. His immense range of superficial knowledge beguiled him into believing that that knowledge was accurate and profound. In executive command in the field he would in all probability have earned undying fame, but temperamentally he is unsuited to fill the post

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of civilian head of a mighty technical department in wartime."

On one point the First Lord quickly made up his mind: merit, and merit only, must be the passport to advancement; the work must be entrusted to the best workman available; to selection and not to mere seniority must be due all appointments, especially if such appointments were likely to lead to service in the face of the enemy; it was no use having a Navy on battle footing unless the Navy were trained under the most expert advice for the battle area.

Winston Churchill had been endowed by nature not only with a full, but with a double, portion of self-reliance; in a grave matter such as this he had neither need nor desire to seek advice from anyone. But if impatient of criticism from his contemporaries he would be willing to appeal to posterity for judgment on his every action. "Time and events," he wrote to Mr. Long¹ when war broke out, "alone can show whether the Admiralty organisation is sound, and whether the advice I have given to the Government was just. One must expect many troubles and disappointments; anyhow the sailors are very confident of good results."

¹ Later Lord Long, sometime First Lord of the Admiralty.

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The resignation of Sir Arthur Wilson, popularly and appropriately known as "Tug," was tactfully brought about¹ and Sir Francis Bridgman took over the post of First Sea Lord with Prince Louis of Battenberg as his second-in-command and later as his successor. The third Sea Lord was to be the courtly if weather-beaten Admiral Pakenham; other changes of appointments were equally sensible, and with the super-competent David Beatty as Naval Secretary no wonder that before the close of the year there loomed large the new Naval War Staff, the edifice of which Winston was the designer and architect.

Prince Louis of Battenberg must have a word to himself; in this not-too-German German Prince the First Lord rightly placed his entire confidence and never for a moment withdrew it, even when overwrought public opinion brought about a resignation which was generally and deeply regretted. The father of Prince Louis was a member of the House of Hesse and at the Court of his sister, the Empress of Russia, he found himself, rather to his surprise, engaged to one of her ladies-in-waiting. The fruit of the union was one

¹ When in 1915 Mr. Balfour succeeded to the Admiralty Wilson was invited but refused to return to his post; he said stoutly that he would not work under any other First Lord than Winston.

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daughter and four sons, the latter all of them splendid types of manhood. Prince Louis, naturalised in this country, entered the Navy in 1868; he made his way upwards without any winds of favour in his back and was noted as one of the most capable officers in the Service. Though an entirely professional sailor he was a most popular figure in London; at Marlborough House he was treated as one of the family and having like the, then, Princess of Wales, winced under the Prussian heel, was one with her in hatred for "those hateful Huns," as that gracious Lady would express herself towards them.

The Home Rule guns were muttering and the Ulster guns were growling when, in January, 1912, Winston Churchill was warned that there might be trouble if he held the meeting arranged for him in the Ulster Hall at Belfast; men of Ulster, he was assured, would prevent by force the delivery of demand for Home Rule on their own premises; they would remind him, quite otherwise than verbally, that his grandfather had been a "Tory-nominated Viceroy and that his father, whether prompted by rhythm or reason, had declared that 'Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right'." For Winston a threat would always act as a tonic. Atavism here meant nothing to him; he kept his

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engagement and delivered his speech in a huge marquee on the Nationalist football ground; there was no disturbance, but then there were four thousand men under arms in the city at the time. Far more dust was kicked up when, at Glasgow, on his way back to London, he declared that: "For England a great fleet is a necessity, for Germany a luxury; it is existence for us, it is expansion for them." It was undoubtedly a provocative pronouncement, but the First Lord had himself been provoked by reading in a daily paper of the Kaiser's avowed intention to add largely to the German ship-building programme. There was an outcry in Germany; the word "luxury," when translated, bore a rather different meaning and was susceptible of offence: the Liberal papers echoed the German wrath and Winston braced himself for a rather thin time in the Cabinet. Perhaps he remembered that when Arthur Balfour apologised for a rather tame speech, pleading that it had been delivered after a high tea, Lord Salisbury sighed and said, he wished that Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, then hot on the Kruger warpath, would only speak after a high tea. The Glasgow speech had less than nothing of a post-prandial character, but the speaker might have been rightly thought to have crossed a little way over the frontier of

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prudence; happily Mr. Haldane,¹ just then returned from his not very fruitful mission to Berlin, declared that the First Lord had by no means hindered but had largely helped the pourparlers; Mr. Haldane—who had for his companion Sir Ernest Cassel—had been able to tell the German Chancellor—and to tell him very distinctly—that if Germany added a third squadron he might find us with five or even six squadrons in the home waters.

Winston, of course, fully appreciated that the Emperor William, however didactic in speech, was apt to be a little confused in mind about Anglo-French-German relations. In 1894 he told our military attaché that, having failed to get war with France, England now wanted war with Germany; it would be an easier job for her as Germany had less ships than France. Then, at the luncheon after King Edward's funeral, with his host's champagne scarcely dry on his lips, he suggested to the French Ambassador that France would do well to side with Germany in the event of Germany finding herself in the field against England. A truly sinister proposal, but one which has quite lately been carried into something like effect.

Contrary to expectation, the Naval estimates

¹ Later Viscount Haldane, Secretary of State for War

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showed no great increase in expenditure; unlike some men who have had a public purse entrusted to them, Winston had no wish to spend money unless a real return could be promised for the outlay. But he made a wise disposition in effecting a concentration in the North Sea, and he recalled Fisher from the shades of retirement to deal with the important matter of oil; Winston was perhaps a little before others in recognising the cardinal importance of this lubricant, the supply of which, he was sure, must be under Government control.

A matter of immediate moment was the manufacture of the fifteen-inch guns, which were calculated to throw a shell weighing nearly a ton over a distance of five miles and thus put into the shade all former projectiles. Fisher likened these giants to Jack Johnson's big punch; the Navy, on account of their size and the secrecy fondly supposed to attach to them, nicknamed them the "Hush-and-Push" guns. The First Lord said soberly in Parliament: "We shall have ten ships armed with this weapon by the time that any other Naval Power has two; we have acted without making a trial gun, trusting entirely to British naval science in marine artillery." But the First Lord would really have preferred to shake hands, if

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possible, rather than to shoot if necessary; he proposed that Germany and England should take a naval holiday in 1913 and that there should be "a blank page in the book of misunderstanding." It was an ultimatum couched in the most amiable terms, but it met with no response. The whole German Press was unanimous, and very vocal, that the suggestion of a naval stand-steady was unacceptable and impracticable. So ten years later a German writer was remarking with some irritation that Mr. Churchill had profound contempt for the League of Nations which he evidently considered a very poor substitute for a strong British Navy.

There was to be a pleasant interlude to work in Whitehall; Naval control of the Mediterranean was on the tapis in May, 1912, and the First Lord suggested to the Prime Minister a conference at Malta; the matter could there be discussed with the Governor, Sir Leslie Rundle—whom Churchill would remember in South Africa under his nickname Sir Leasurely Trundle—and Lord Kitchener, who could be summoned from Cairo. The proposal was afoot to leave the Southern Sea to the care of the French and dedicate the British Navy to the North Sea, where Germany's swollen fleet portended danger. Egypt was, of course,

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forward in the Agent-General's mind when the policing of the Mediterranean was in question, and he disfavoured any diversion of our Fleet; his knowledge of naval facts and figures came rather as a surprise, but the First Lord was entirely with him as to the undesirable effect of causing Egypt to look to India instead of to England for reinforcements and supplies. The eventual decision was in favour of a very small number of powerful ships in the Mediterranean, a battle squadron based on Gibraltar, defences against submarines, and a port at Alexandria with troops to defend the wireless station. This was rather frowned on in Egypt, but the First Lord could congratulate himself that his programme was drawn up in the nick of time; troubles were brewing in the Near East, and within a few months war had broken out in that most troublesome theatre of the Balkans. The discussions were entirely harmonious; any soreness—which was always imaginary rather than real—between two really big men had long disappeared, but they little thought then that two years later they would be Cabinet colleagues to deal with a World War.

At the beginning of 1912 there had been no sort of Anglo-French naval understanding equivalent to what existed between the military

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staffs. When it was decided a little later that conversations should take place between the Ministry of Marine and the Admiralty the First Lord immediately put his finger on an important spot. The moral claims of France on Great Britain would, of course, be appreciably increased. "Circumstances might arise," he wrote to the Prime Minister, "which would make it desirable to come to the aid of France with all our force by land and sea. But we ask nothing in return. If we should be attacked by Germany we should not make it a charge of bad faith against France if she left us to fight alone; nothing in naval or military arrangements ought to have the effect of exposing us to such a charge if, when the time comes, we stand out." This idea was not well received in France. M. Poincaré wrote: "As a set-off to the noisy polemics of the *Morning Post* on one side and the *Manchester Guardian* on the other, Mr. Churchill has forwarded to our naval and military attachés an advance plan of concerted defence, but—doubtless to forestall the possible objections of several of his colleagues—the First Lord drafted a preamble which, in the opinion of our General Staff, threatened to destroy the practical value of the Entente." Article II recited that naval dispositions should be made by each of the two

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Governments with entire independence and wholly in conformity with their own country's interests, surely a very inadequate method of concerting two naval engagements. But the President of the Republic was largely satisfied when, in July, the First Lord said in the House of Commons that "together with the French Fleet our Mediterranean Fleet would constitute a force superior to any naval combination; to this the Prime Minister¹ added: "I say deliberately that our friendships are in no sense exclusive friendships."

From now onwards it was noticeable that M. Poincaré—of whom it was well said that if he were hard as a nut, he was clear as crystal and as clean as a whistle—continued to watch closely but approvingly all that Winston said or did.

The public mood was just now suited to the work Winston must put in hand; it was not alarmed but it was watchful. By now the First Lord had in his pocket the authentic German naval programme; he had to act on what he knew without disclosing his knowledge; he could not say openly that the swollen personnel the German law was providing rendered quite hollow Germany's non-aggressive profession;

¹ Mr. Bonar Law, always disposed to destructive rather than constructive criticism, was just now complaining that the measures taken by the Admiralty were insufficient.

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but he had to base his plans on what was little else than a German threat. The moment, too, was propitious and the Admiralty was in high favour in France; bluejackets and marines had taken prominent part in the fêtes which celebrated the unveiling of the statue of Queen Victoria at Nice and their appearance had been greeted by cheering crowds with shouts of "Vive l'Angleterre."

To save money there were to be no naval manœuvres this year, only Fleet exercises, these to be wound up with a Grand Review by the King at Spithead and illuminations of elaborate design. The Press were asked rather to specialise on the illuminations and not to underline the magnitude and potentialities of the Fleet. But as England was honeycombed by spies, of whom Prince Henry of Prussia, recently on a touring visit here, was by no means the least observant, the Kaiser must have heard at first hand that, steaming at fifteen knots, it took six hours for the two hundred ships — with 70,000 officers and men on board — to pass the saluting point. Truly a superb spectacle, but the chief value of the occasion was to be found in the sequel.

The First Lord had been summoned home owing to his wife's sudden illness; hearty was his approval when he heard that the Fleet, by

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the direct order of the First Sea Lord, had not dispersed.

If at home the Irish trouble suffered to raise bitter controversy and to oust from office the Secretary for War¹ and the Chief of the Staff² the European sky was wholly serene until there suddenly appeared the dark midsummer cloud which, ephemeral as it seemed at first, was to presage a storm of blood and fire. In a back street in Bosnia a frantic patriot fired a pistol and within five weeks five white nations were standing to arms. Within a few days Austria was seen to level a weapon at Servia and Germany, with murder in her mind, was to lay a powerful finger on the trigger. The fire-arm was for the moment pointed to a petty State, the bullet was intended eventually to pierce the heart of Britain. "*C'est le tout qui fait la musique,*" and the *Hamburger Nachrichten* was to start the chorus of a hymn of hate. "We have taken the field against France but at bottom it is against England we are fighting everywhere; we must force France to her knees till she chokes; it is not yet time to offer terms. Between Russia and Germany there is no insoluble problem. It is from England we must wring the utmost price for this gigantic struggle,

¹ Colonel Seely, later Lord Mottistone.

² Sir John French, later Earl of Ypres.

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however dearly others may have to pay for the help they have given her." A quarter of a century later Herr Hitler could scarcely do better than take this allocution from his drawer and without altering a word emblazon it on his banner.

On August 1st, the First Lord, upon his own responsibility and at some risk of censure in the Cabinet, ordered the mobilisation of the Navy; five days earlier he had sent the Grand Fleet to Scapa Flow, their time-table precisely worked out and fixed by himself. The movement reached the ears of the German Ambassador, the greatly liked Prince Lichnovsky, who entered a protest at the Foreign Office, to receive the assurance that the movement was entirely void of offensive character and that our Fleet would not approach German waters. It was to fall to the First Lord to arrange the departure of Prince Lichnovsky and his Austrian colleague, another personal friend, Count Mensdorff. The arrangements were carried out with the most scrupulous care and courtesy, in striking contrast to the insults and threatened physical violence offered to Sir William Goschen at Berlin. The French Ambassador, in that city, was hustled into a railway train and locked up in a compartment much as if he were a prisoner, his cheque was

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refused, and he was roughly told that before leaving he must pay in gold for the journey of himself and for the whole staff of the Embassy.

"If it were only a question of Asquith, Churchill and Grey all would be well, but more and more do these Ministers seem to have to reckon with the opposition of some of their colleagues." Such was an entry on the 1st August in the faithfully kept diary of M. Raymond Poincaré, and his comment was painfully true. Cabinet Councils on the European situation were held every day; Ireland had faded out of the picture and France, with all that France then meant for England and Europe, loomed large; yet Ministers such as Harcourt, Beauchamp and Morley believed, or affected to believe, that a loophole could be found through which our neutrality could creep. Winston heard early the passionate appeal from the President of the Republic which the Director of Protocol, on the 30th July, travelled to England to place in King George's hands; but there were for him days of agonising suspense before the Cabinet, with only two malcontents, which swore that if Belgium were violated England would draw the sword and not sheathe it until there were crushed to powder the accursed system of Prussianism which for fifty years had terrorised Europe.

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The Sunday of August 2nd, until early evening, Winston spent with his children at the seaside; it was not the least of his qualifications for high office that for a brief moment, if opportunity offered, he could switch off his mind altogether from pressing troubles; for an hour or two on that peaceful Sunday it was the children who really mattered.

No sort or shadow of doubt existed in his mind as to what would follow the ultimatum to Germany which the Foreign Secretary disclosed to an excited House of Commons on August 3rd; at eleven p.m. (midnight by German time) on the 4th the fiat went forth to the British Navy: "Prepare at once for hostilities against Germany." His years of preparation were over; the day of action for the navy had dawned. It has been well said that in every individual life there is one supreme hour towards which all earlier conditions move, from which all later happenings may be reckoned. It is possible to think that when Big Ben boomed out his eleven fateful strokes Winston Spencer Churchill felt that here was his hour and that hereafter he would dwell on every moment of it.

How different the story across the road in Whitehall, where the War Secretary Elect must say bluntly: "There is no Army," and could

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add with equal truth: "Nor is there any means with which to equip one." At a glance Kitchener had seen the truth, that for the gigantic task the country had shouldered our miniature expeditionary force—with partially trained Territorials behind it—was ludicrously inadequate. The politicians had seemingly thought that soldiers could wage war on some principle of limited liability; before the first gunfire their views were found to be as untenable as the provisions of the military authorities were entirely insufficient. *Per contra*, the First Lord could say, without reservation or fear of contradiction: "The Navy is ready." "There is one thing," his great colleague said to him quite simply, "which no one can take from you: the Navy was ready."

All credit to the Admiralty—and to the department of the Quartermaster-General—for the swift despatch of the Expeditionary Force conveyed across the Channel in 240 troop ships. It is not to belittle the arrangements which later issued in the same result to be reminded that many difficulties, induced by sudden emergency, in 1914 had been smoothed away, with time on our side, in 1939. The secrecy as to movements of troops which the War Secretary strictly enjoined was wholly endorsed by the First Lord; it provoked both

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pungent and pathetic comments as to denying “good-byes” and “send-offs,” but when it was suddenly announced that the Army had been landed in France without a single mishap sentiment had evidently been rightly subordinated to safety.

Happenings at sea soon came thick and fast.

David Beatty's daring dash into Heligoland at the end of August, when he accounted for three German cruisers and a destroyer, was, other than its value as a naval success, a special joy to Winston: he had noted a Flag Lieutenant's exploits with his gunboats at Dongola; to the cavalry Beatty had brought timely help at Omdurman, incident after incident had multiplied in his favour, and, without any sort of favouritism, Beatty seems always to have been the man for Winston's money. Fisher was always a little too impetuous; Jellicoe¹ was rather too cold; Beatty always warmed up to take a risk provided the object in view was really worth it.

It was while the operations on the Aisne were settling into deadlock that there was conceived the wise idea of lodging once more a British Army in Flanders, where, as it turned out, until

¹ Sir John Jellicoe, later Lord Jellicoe, Commanding the Grand Fleet.

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the end of the War it was to fight and, in the end of the War, was to prevail. Before Sir John French could take up his new position Antwerp was in dire peril; late on the evening of October 2nd Sir Edward Grey came with Mr. Churchill and Prince Louis to 2, Carlton Gardens, to deal with a telegram from our Minister to Belgium. The gloomy missive ran:

“Acting on advice unanimously given by Superior Council of War in presence of the King, the Government have decided to leave to-morrow for Ostend. The Queen will also leave. The King with field army will withdraw, commencing with advance guard to-morrow in the direction of Ghent to protect coastline and eventually it is hoped to co-operate with the Allied armies. It is said that town will hold out for 5 or 6 days, but it seems most unlikely that when the Court and Government are gone resistance will be so much prolonged.”

The situation was certainly grave; if Antwerp fell before the left flank of the Allies could be supported the whole line might totter. What was to be done, for something had to be done at once? Would the First Lord—who had been taken out of the train *en route* to Dunkirk—go

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himself to the beleaguered city and urge Monsieur de Broqueville, that splendid person who was both Prime Minister and War Minister, to hold on with the help of the naval division and Yeomanry brigade, the only force we could send him. The naval division, as, of course, Winston was fully aware, numbered about eight thousand men, of whom two thousand were fully trained Marines and the rest barely trained Reservists, ill-equipped to the point of sorry farce. The question had only to be asked to be answered with eager assent. It would be difficult to think of anything Winston Spencer Churchill would not do provided the something were of some service to the State, and the more readily if it were spiced with some danger for himself. To Antwerp he went and for five days did all that courage and resourcefulness could do to battle with the situation already beyond remedy. The information which had reached the Cabinet as to Antwerp's peril had been unaccountably slow in arrival and scanty in detail; there were some to think that given earlier and fuller intelligence means might have been contrived to ward off what could not be but a heavy blow. It was the oft-told tale of too late. The arrival—if it were a little theatrical—of the First Lord and his advice heartened King

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Albert and his counsellors and the Belgian troops were thereby to be nerved to extricate themselves, anyhow without dishonour, from a position which was evidently untenable.

Winston, with energy fired to white heat but all the while with cool head, rushed hither and thither; there were conferences in the Palace, at the Belgian headquarters, in a cottage within the line of fire and on a road which was already receiving its ration of German hate; until the arrival of Sir Henry Rawlinson, who was hurrying from St. Omer, he took military control and in his fervour telegraphed to the Prime Minister that if his continued presence could avail he would vacate his post in White-hall and assume command of the entire Antwerp relief force. When consulted on this point Kitchener raised no official objection; he merely suggested that it would be easier to appoint a General for the immediate purpose than to find a statesman capable at the present juncture, to administer the Admiralty.¹ The First Lord, in glowing terms, addressed the Naval division on their arrival and at once stimulated and steadied them; truly their appearance on the scene—although the rather

¹ So, when it was proposed that a division should be assigned to General Baden-Powell, the War Secretary said that he could lay his hand on several competent Divisional Generals but could find no one who could carry on the invaluable work of the Boy Scouts.

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forlorn Reservists carried their ammunition in their pockets and their bayonets stuck in their gaiters—was strong in relief.

Winston's gallant attempt to relieve Antwerp would have been something of a farce if it had not been more of a tragedy; in war, mirth so often mocks at the heels of misery. But if the adventure were directly a failure it was, if indirectly, to be stamped with success, as it enabled the War Secretary to send to Belgium a Fourth Corps under Rawlinson. The Government had to be gently squeezed about this; despite the assurances of the Admiralty the more nervous members were a little apprehensive about invasion and had extracted a promise from the Prime Minister that for the time no more soldiers should leave the country; in the crisis Kitchener persuaded his rather flustered colleagues to send overseas the Seventh Infantry Division and the Third Cavalry Division, which Julian Byng—Winston's sometime Colonel—had been called from Egypt to command. This move was rather naïvely suggested as a temporary measure; with the relief, or the fall, of Antwerp the unit could, of course, be recalled, but the War Secretary and the First Lord knew full well that once within touch of the enemy the Corps would remain on the field of battle where, as a matter of history,

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it just turned the scale in our favour in the first Battle of Ypres. Just then every hour's delay for the Germans was of priceless value to us, and every British soldier was an obstacle in their melecficent path; without this contribution, added to the resistance which Antwerp had been able to put up, Ypres would surely have fallen to the foe, Dunkirk must have been let go and Calais could scarcely have been saved. It was a most successful, if rather rusé, coup, but when anyone spoke of it as a military measure Kitchener would always say that Winston Churchill must have a large share of the credit.

On his return from Antwerp Winston found that the demand for the retirement of Prince Louis was so shrill and so sustained that it could no longer be disregarded. Past confidential services of the highest order were forgotten; it was enough for busybodies to remind one another that Princess Louis might be in touch with her sister, Princess Henry of Prussia, although it had been deliberately stated that she only held converse with her two other sisters in Russia, the country then our close, if rather unsatisfactory, ally. Prince Louis having with perfect dignity resigned his office, the First Lord took a bold but well considered step and beckoned Fisher back to

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his old place. The first task set to the returning Lord was to redress the loss of Sir Christopher Cradock's squadron at Coronel by sending Admiral Sturdee with two battle cruisers from the Grand Fleet to intercept Admiral Spee, whose ships were encountered and sunk at the Falkland Islands. The complete success of the operation was due to Fisher's instant grasp of the situation and his insistence that speed was the key to it; Admiral Sturdee and his flotilla arrived on the scene just, but only just, in time. "*Qui trop étreint mal embrasse*" was a motto which Winston would approve even if he did not know it, and for the conduct of the naval battle he gave a free hand to his subordinate and gave him entire credit for it. "My dear," he wrote, "this was your show, your luck; it was a great coup, your flair was quite true. Let us have some more victories and confound all our enemies abroad and at home."

Of course, the other side of the medal soon presented itself; soon after dawn on September 22nd three of our ships steaming along the Dutch coast were torpedoed with heavy loss of life. The First Lord had to bow to some public and professional rebuke; he did not say—he was never prone to say "I told you so"—that if his latest order for withdrawal had been obeyed the tragedy would have been averted. It added

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just something to the disaster that it occurred just when the First Lord had made one of his least happy pronouncements: "If the German Fleet did not come out and fight it would be dug like a rat out of a hole."

For the student of the period the relations between Churchill and Fisher must have psychological as well as professional interest; they differed in character, in temperament, in outlook, and at one moment their points of view could scarcely have been stretched further apart. But the innate frankness and sincerity of purpose ingrained in both served to enable them to work for a time in perfect amity and for each at all times to be wholly alive to the other's outstanding qualities. "I am attached to the old boy," Churchill wrote to the Prime Minister, although the ties between them at that moment were about to snap. "And it is a great pleasure for me to work with him; and I think he reciprocates the feeling."

On one very human matter there was quick and sharp contention. "With reprisals," says a great writer, "the interest and principal of a bloody debt are accumulated." When in December the bombardment of London by airships was darkly threatened the old sailor made the monstrous proposal that a large number of hostages should be taken from the

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Germans in this country and that we should solemnly execute one of them for every British civilian killed by a bomb. The First Lord sternly protested; apart from his quick sympathy for men and women, mostly as helpless as they were hopeless, he was sure that ruthless procedure of this sort would not vary German action and would indelibly stain British reputation. Fisher thereupon tendered his resignation, a gesture which was fairly frequent, and of which Winston took no notice; normal relations suffered no interruption, but there is reason to think that the incident never ceased to rankle in the mind of the man who so often allowed huffiness to mar his better judgment.

As to the immediate construction of an armada to ride supreme on the sea, both men were in total agreement. Both would subscribe to Macaulay's axiom that "to carry the spirit of peace into war is a weak and cruel policy." "The true war spirit," Churchill declared in happy imagery, "is opposed to the short-sighted prudent housewifery of the peace-time mind." There was total accord, also, as to the required magnitude of the Fleet, but there were divergent views as to the purposes it should fulfil; Fisher nourished in his mind a landing on the Baltic to deliver a knock-out blow; the First Lord was meditating another

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plan at the time, when this was found impossible he bent himself to the great scheme for which he assumed full responsibility, and as to which he would brook no contradiction.

In the first four months of the War the strategical problem had been stiff but fairly simple; to stop the Germans and to sustain the French was the governing consideration to which all others must yield. But by the end of the year the main problem was not how to check an onrush across France but how to win a wide-spreading war. The horizon widened, discussions of international importance started, and there began the clamour of contradictory tongues which was to continue long after the clash of swords had ceased.

While the Battle of the Aisne was still swaying, the Commander-in-Chief invited the First Lord to his headquarters, and together they carefully concocted a plan to clear the Belgian coast. From the beginning of hostilities the First Lord kept in close personal touch with the Commander-in-Chief, both by correspondence and visits to headquarters. Except on one occasion the War Secretary did not demur to his procedure. One wonders if the converse had happened whether the First Lord would have raised any objection to Lord Kitchener writing directly to the Commander of the

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Grand Fleet and paying visits to Scapa Flow. Recent events go to show that the Admiralty may well have regarded with something like dismay the prospect of the enemy sitting down on the flank of our cross-Channel routes; the employment of our amphibious power was in itself attractive and we coveted the control of Dunkirk. The First Lord just now set scarcely any limits to the effect of naval guns on land defence and he wrote to Sir John: "If you push your left flank along the sand dunes of the shore to Ostend and Zeebrugge we could give you heavy guns to the sea in absolutely devastating support." The French Government, when approached, threw a bucket of tepid water on the proposal; General Joffre sternly protested against committing troops to an offensive on our extreme left, anyhow until the direct lines of advance to Paris were absolutely secured.

On October 29th, Turkish warships bombarded Odessa and Sebastopol, and the Entente Ambassadors at Constantinople asked for their passports; the next week Russia declared war on Turkey and, to test the range of the Turkish guns, a Franco-British Fleet bombarded the Dardanelles; on the 5th November Great Britain and France formally declared war on Turkey.

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The Belgian plan was definitely dismissed by the War Council early in the New Year and the First Lord now devoted himself to the scheme of which day by day he became more and more enamoured; it was to take shape in a great concerted attack on Constantinople. Mr. Lloyd George propounded a peculiar idea; his proposal was to establish a considerable reserve in England, from which France could be helped if hard pressed, and to transfer the whole of the British force in France to the Balkans and to dedicate the growing Kitchener armies to the same theatre. He sought thus to reinforce Serbia, to attract Italy¹ and Greece to our side, to overawe Bulgaria—who was just then borrowing a trifle of £3,000,000 from Germany—and to win over Rumania. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, despite his great attainments and splendid services to his country, would appear to have had only a bowing acquaintance with geography and a rather nebulous knowledge of strategy. The military authorities gently reminded him that from Salonica to Nish there was only one railway line, poor in rolling-stock, and on one side of it there would be a doubtfully neutral Greece and on the other a probably hostile Bulgaria.

¹ To the French Ambassador M. Cambon is attributed the saying: "Nos bons amis les Italiens attendent avec impatience le moment pour voler, au secours des Vainqueurs."

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From Cairo General Maxwell was strongly backing Kitchener's idea of a landing at Ayas Bay so as to cut the line between Amman and Taurus and prevent the Turks from coming eastwards; Fisher kept his eye on Schleswig-Holstein; Joffre had no eye for anything but an offensive in France.

Amid this welter of opinions there came just then from that splendid soldier the Grand Duke Nicholas an urgent appeal for help; he pleaded, anyhow for a demonstration against the Turks, who were pressing Russia hard on the Caucasus. Greatly moved by this cry the First Lord took counsel with his technical advisers, the Admirals in the Eastern Mediterranean, and became more and more convinced that an attack on the Dardanelles promised solid success and would most surely confound Turkish devices; if the Army could help, so much the better; if not, the Navy would do the trick alone.

The First Lord had been deeply impressed by the effect of the German and Austrian heavy howitzers on the forts of Namur and Liége, which had been overcome with startling ease and rapidity. That an attack by ships upon equipped forts without military co-operation was rarely fruitful had been a theory which, as it seemed, could now be safely traversed; and

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in our new battle cruiser, the *Queen Elizabeth*, we had mounted guns every bit as powerful as anything the enemy had used or could adduce; the mighty weapon it was proposed to wield might well ward off the blow of which Russia was in dire dread. The First Lord spoke, of course, *ex cathedra*, and the War Council decided that the Admiralty should prepare for a naval expedition to bombard and seize the Gallipoli Peninsula with Constantinople as the objective.

The first week in February Mr. Lloyd George crossed to Paris and drew from M. Delcassé a promise that the French Government would send a division to Salonica if we would do the same; it seemed a cheap price to pay for the assistance of Greece and perhaps Rumania, and things pointed that way when King Constantine dropped a bomb. Tino had been hectored by his Imperial brother-in-law and refused to budge, but the troops proposed for Salonica might well be employed for the Dardanelles and Mr. Churchill's outlook was proportionately rosier. The Turks having been thrust back from the Suez Canal, part of the garrison in Egypt might well be allotted to them; the Royal Naval Division had been fitted out at the Crystal Palace after its trip to Belgium and there was a body of stalwart Marines. The fine

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29th Division also came under orders, but its despatch was delayed for some days on receipt of a message from Joffre that unless this unit was held ready to join him at a day's notice he would not be responsible for the immunity of the line in France. Whether or no this delay was fatal to the First Lord's well-laid and rapidly maturing plans is one of the questions germane to the subject which the student must answer for himself. To Egypt the First Lord of course looked as the key of our position in the East, an opinion shared by the German Staff, who openly said that the Suez Canal was the jugular vein of the British Empire. Cairo was, of course, still overrun with German agents who through 1914 had been steadily preparing the way for an attack on the Great Ditch.

Such in rough outline are some of the causes which led up to a campaign the lasting effects of which have perhaps not yet been determined. As to its genesis, its circumstances, its conduct a hundred—and more—volumes and more than five times that number of articles have been written. Historians, authors and chroniclers have vied with one another for the last word and have varied widely in their views; some have been open mouthed in championship of a great adventure; others have been critics

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to the point of bitterness; those who have argued dispassionately the pros and cons have probably approached most nearly to the truth. Mr. Churchill himself, moving with perfect ease and passionless logic among his facts and figures, has unfolded for us a story, copiously and carefully documented, which will remain for all time as the standard work. It is, of course, an exposition of his own case from his own angle, but not the least of the merits of these stately volumes is the generous temper in which the writer alludes to the men—notably Kitchener and Fisher—with whom he found himself in sharp opposition but whose affections he did not forfeit for an hour. To the most prejudiced reader one fact must emerge; that the designer of the *démarche* had fortified himself by the closest study, that the map of Europe was an open book to him and one which he had committed to heart; and that he was inspired from end to end by the purest patriotism.

In mid-war a Royal Commission sat, and a pompous, if rather uninformed, majority report was after many delays presented to the public. The signatories were presumably and blissfully unaware at the time that they were refreshing their minds and memories with the aid of inaccurate maps. One of the more dis-

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tinguished Generals who had been called as an important witness wrote to me after I had given my own evidence: "I spent a profitless morning with the D.C. They did not seem to me to be driving at anything particular, they struck me as extremely ignorant old gentlemen who will most probably arrive at a wrong conclusion." Said Mr. Bumble on a critical occasion: "The Law is a Hass"; one wonders what would have been his considered opinion of some of the Royal Commissions which have so solemnly and often so fruitlessly sat.

On the 25th April Sir Ian Hamilton, G.O.C. Mediterranean Force, in buoyant frame of mind, could telegraph to the War Office: "Thanks to God Who calmed the seas and to the Royal Navy who rowed our fellows ashore as coolly as if at a regatta, thanks also to the dauntless spirit shown by all ranks of both Services, we have landed 29,000 men upon six beaches in the face of desperate resistance from strong Turkish infantry forces, well backed by artillery." When this message was communicated to the First Lord his hopes must indeed have risen high; for a moment it surely looked as if his finger had pointed to the road which, even if it were to be a Via Dolorosa, would be the road to victory; and Via Dolorosa though it surely proved to be, it was not trodden in

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vain. But hopes were almost at once damped; the two battles of Krithia showed that the Peninsula was not to be rushed; we were faced on another front with the dreary deadlock of trench warfare. "The 'istory of 'Arrow is an 'istory of 'itches," said the janitor of that College to a friend of mine, and if it were not to treat lightly a drama in which the tragic prevailed the same might be said of the Dardanelles expedition. With later happenings on the Peninsula Winston had, of course, no direct concern; there are many who think that had he been allowed to retain his office, to direct with all his energy and all his acumen, the operations of the Navy throughout 1915 a different story might have been told of the struggle against our sometime opponent, and that the victory—the fruits of which were to be so largely squandered—vouchsafed to us in 1918 might have come much sooner. But it was not to be; the First Lord, seeing danger ahead, wrote on the 14th May to the Prime Minister: "A moment will arise in the [Dardanelles] operations when the Admiral and the General on the spot will wish and require to run a risk with the Fleet for a great and decisive effort. If I agree with them I shall sanction it and I cannot consent to be paralysed by the veto of a friend who, whatever the

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result, will always say 'I was always against the Dardanelles'."

It was obvious, and perhaps perfectly right, that the movements of ships—whom Fisher would allude to as his ships—were to be directed, as to final orders, by the First Lord, but Fisher, in high dudgeon, resigned, although for a few days in obedience to a direct mandate from the King he remained, but remained passive, in his office.

At dawn the very next day the German High Seas Fleet came out and for hours Winston hoped against hope that battle would be engaged and engaged just at the very moment when he would be in supreme and solitary control; once more everything was ready but the German Fleet thought better of it and turned back; it had only been a reconnaissance and the First Lord's last chance of winning a war at sea had passed. He at once drew up a new Board of Admiralty and hastened to Downing Street to secure for it the Prime Minister's sanction. It was too late. "Politics," said Lord Wolseley once to the present writer, "when concerned with the Army, are generally a dirty game." It is not to apply that saying to the present juncture to remember that Winston was first there, whether openly or covertly, and however undeservedly, *persona ingrata* with the Tory

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Party. Now Mr. Bonar Law, leader of that Party in the House of Commons, an able rather than an affable Scotsman, wrote—from Lansdowne House—to the Prime Minister, demanding information about the Churchill-Fisher dissension in general and about Fisher's resignation in particular; underlying the whole letter, phrased in trenchant terms, was the dual demand that a Coalition Government must be formed and that the First Lord of the Admiralty must be invited to hand in his Seals; Fisher would follow in his train.

That Winston Churchill should be unemployed in mid-strike was unthinkable and the Duchy of Lancaster was thought to be an honourable office where—as he himself surmised—his advice on the larger questions of the war would still be usefully and immediately forthcoming. Just ten years earlier there had been a little flutter, when Lord James of Hereford, an expert lawyer, discussed the King's right to the title of Duke of Lancaster; he protested that the Dukedom appertained to the descendants of John of Gaunt and not to the Duchy whose rich lands, since the reign of Edward IV, were vested in the Sovereign. The matter having been put up to Buckingham Palace, Edward VII bluntly wrote: "I have

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always imagined that I am Duke of Lancaster as the Sovereign of England always is, and I have no wish to give up my rights." This sufficed, and Lord James, who was a frequent visitor at Sandringham, dropped his suit.

The charge of the Duchy of Lancaster was far from an all-time job and the Chancellor's fluent pen was soon busy with a paper of some nineteen pages, in which he urged that we should, and really must, concentrate our force of arms on the Dardanelles campaign.

"There can be no doubt that we now possess the means and the power"—so ran his peroration—"to take Constantinople before the end of the summer if we act with decision and with a due sense of proportion. The striking down of one of the hostile Empires against which we are contending, and the fall to our arms of one of the most famous capitals in the world, with the results which must flow therefrom, will—conjoined with our other advantages—confer upon us a far-reaching influence among the Allies, and enable us to ensure their indispensable co-operation. Most of all it will react on Russia. It will give the encouragement so sorely needed. It will give the reward so long desired. It will render a service to an Ally unparalleled in the history of nations. It will

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multiply the resources and open the channel for the re-equipment of the Russian Armies. It will dominate the Balkan situation and cover Italy. It will resound through Asia. Here is the prize and the only prize which lies within reach this year. It can certainly be won without unreasonable expense, and within a comparatively short time. But we must act now, and on a scale which makes speedy success certain."

The whole output ran along the highest level of Churchill's famous prose and, apart from its linguistic merits, was shot with an interest which had in it something of pathos; although notes were subsequently issued and interchanged it was practically the swan song of a statesman pleading on behalf of a great cause for which with heart and mind—and with utter understanding—he had loyally laboured.

The memorandum was duly sent, under War Office flying seal, to Sir John French. But for Sir John any other military creed than that of mastering the Germans between Switzerland and the sea was sheer and damnable heresy. Sterling military qualities, unbounded courage, competence and quickness to perform a specific task, love of soldiering and care for the soldiers—all these resided in the Commander-in-Chief,

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but his vision was circumscribed and he was wholly lacking in the priceless gift of imagination with which Churchill had been so richly endowed. He returned the paper with comments as scornful as they were uninformed and couched in a tone which a month earlier he would scarcely have used. So far as one knows, Winston made no murmur as to an opinion on Eastern ventures most ungraciously offered, but after the constant and outspoken approval which reached him from G.H.Q. when he held high office he may well have felt himself wounded and, what was worse, wounded in the House of a Friend.

The day on which the evacuation of Gallipoli was decided in the Cabinet must have been a dark one to the man who had pinned his faith to operations in the Peninsula and was now lodged in the trenches; no less eager, and heartfelt, were the congratulations forthcoming to the naval and military officers who contrived an exodus without a bruise.

Nor, as the military historian has affirmed, was a great adventure admirably conceived and gallantly, if faultily, executed to be barren of fruit. The blow at Turkey's heart—if not immediately fatal—weakened and lessened very sensibly her activity in the East; it remained a

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matter for speculation how far Gallipoli cleared the road to Jerusalem but, without doubt, the heroes of the Dardanelles Expedition had broken—as if with an iron rod—the spine of Turkish military power.

In November the Prime Minister reconstituted the War Council and from it the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was excluded; the Council would be responsible to the Cabinet for the conduct of the War. For an official who had never shirked responsibility, to be in office without any share of authority would be intolerable, nor could Churchill reconcile himself to draw the country's pay for the performance of purely routine duties. Conscience and inclination conspired to compel him to resign.

Lord Randolph, when tendering his first resignation, wrote fretfully: "I have no longer any energy or ideas except to make a disturbance"; his son, head high, handed in his portfolio and buckled on his sword.

A mandate went to France that Major Winston Churchill, Oxfordshire Yeomanry, was to be attached for instruction to the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards; in other words, the sometime President of the Board of Trade, Home Secretary, and First Lord of the

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Admiralty—who, moreover, had taken part in three campaigns—was to be taught his foot drill. Lord Cavan brought the new recruit to the Battalion Headquarters of Colonel Jeffreys, where, for the moment, there existed an under-current of rather chilly feeling. Was the Brigade of Guards being “made use of” to propel a distinguished politician into the fighting line with immediate promotion to follow? But the obvious burning desire of the “politician” to learn anything and everything which the Grenadier Guards could teach him quickly broke down any barrier to good comradeship. The Colonel set the pace by taking his pupil on the first night round the waterlogged line of trenches; a hard bit of walking—punctuated with a good deal of sniping—for anyone who had been leading for some years a sedentary life; then a couple of hours’ sleep was allowed before a return visit to the trenches, which had just been taken over from the Indian Corps who, gallant souls, had found the rain and mud and cold almost unbearable. Day in and night out the instruction in face of the enemy continued and each day the pupil became more and more eager as he became more and more expert. His general military knowledge was freely admitted as the result alike of study and experience, but he

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wanted to know everything which affected the organisation and interior economy of a battalion, as well as the rather specialised business of trench warfare. Work was, of course, interlarded with a good deal of talk and here Winston—who as a talker could have held his own with Dr. Johnson or any other conversationist—became in constant request; he could tell many things of liveliest interest about the war, its genesis and its circumstances, and all the information he had in store he would give with the simplicity that was to some of his hearers a little surprising.

Politics were avoided, except on one occasion, when the Quartermaster professionally expressed himself as an ardent Tariff Reformer to be met with a courteous, but decided: “There, I am unable to agree with you.”

A few days with Battalion Headquarters, then a period of service with a company in the line, and after a month’s training Winston’s mentor could say, and say without hesitation or reserve, that an ex-cavalry officer was entirely competent to command an infantry battalion.

Trained to the hour, and qualified for his new job, Winston was now to command a Scots Fusilier battalion. His efficiency as a battalion

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commander, his powers of leadership, were quickly discernible and undeniable; the earlier cavalry training may have had little technical value; the cavalry spirit he was able to infuse into his methods was a distinct asset. The quickness to seize an opportunity, the flair for offensive movement, the recognition of drill as merely a means to an end, the readiness to adapt himself to any new idea if it were practical, the discipline blended with what Wolseley commended as a refusal to be sat upon by bow and arrow generals—all these were part and parcel not only of cavalry experience but of an infantry officer's own make-up. His word of command, on the rare occasions when it was required, was clear, his voice when delivering a lecture to his men was as penetrating and pleasant as his matter was always happily chosen. "We found Winston," so ran a letter from a Guards officer, "in a dug-out, swathed up to his armpits in furs, a French steel hat on his head and lecturing to his officers and men." The furs were not a sign that Winston specially felt the cold but that he always believed in making himself as comfortable as circumstance would permit; if anything good were obtainable he would obtain it and enjoy it; if it were at all out of reach he would dismiss it without a further thought. His mammoth

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cigars were his one luxury; for cigarettes he had no use. Here was, perhaps, a reflex of character. If his faults—often so much more attractive than the merits of other people—were large, his fine qualities were far larger.

Stray acquaintances who may have encountered a somewhat abrupt manner might have been surprised to note how quickly he endeared himself to officers and men alike; the battalion was largely Glasgow-recruited and the Colonel had sympathetic insight—as would Lord Trenchard, another distinguished Scots Fusilier—into the mind of the Lowlander; the Lowlander is a man of keen calculation, trusting nothing to luck, patient to wait, prompt to act, persistent to the edge—but only to the edge—of obstinacy; in a word, of the most reliable material from which to cut out and shape a soldier. Perhaps of design as much as of friendship, Winston had chosen for his second-in-command a Highlander. But then Archie Sinclair¹ was a Highlander who, however he might have dreamed of an England armed and afoot to defend a great cause, of the British Empire as the dominant military Power of the world, was a “scientific” officer who knew his

¹ Later, Major the Right Honourable Sir Archibald Sinclair, Secretary of State for Air.

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profession inside out and knew with precision how to mate courage to caution. Surely never was a pair better matched to step high, and to step sure, in military double harness. No wonder the battalion earned high approval, no wonder that its dissolution excited general regret. But soon after Colonel Churchill assumed his command Carson, Bonar Law, and other high and dry Tories began to bombard him with letters about the gravity of the situation, the need for conscription and the urgency of returning to London in order to join them on their particular warpath. Colonel Churchill did not, of course, know that Lord Kitchener had obtained from Mr. Henderson—the representative of Labour in the Cabinet—a promise that the Labour Party would not corporately oppose any legislative measure for general service, so long as it was labelled as a special and immediate requirement and not as a policy. Winston began to be torn between his duty to, and love of, his battalion and the wider responsibilities for which his political friends were beckoning to him to return. Whether or no he would have yielded to their representations is problematic; anyhow, it seemed to him that his path was made plain by the sudden decision of G.H.Q. to reduce the number of battalions in a division and to amalgamate

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some of the battalions whose recruiting resources were beginning to run low.

The 6th Battalion was earmarked for amalgamation with another battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, then at Loos; the Commanding Officer of this battalion was senior to Winston and naturally claimed his right to command.

Colonel Churchill could, of course, have repaired to London and might quite possibly have been successful in obtaining another regimental appointment; but this seemed rather the shadow than the substance and, after grave deliberation, he decided to apply for permission to return home and resume his Parliamentary walk in life. The War Secretary admitted himself as in something of a dilemma; if I agree offhand, he said, the soldiers may think themselves aggrieved and argue that gross favouritism is being exercised; if, on the other hand, I refuse, the politicians will say that the War Office is afraid of attacks being made in Parliament on military administration. He decided that the fair thing would be to offer no opposition to Winston's wishes but on the understanding that no future claim for military employment should ever be considered.

When, on the eve of his fatal journey to

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Russia, the War Secretary met the House of Commons in secret session to give Members the information which they, and he, believed to be theirs of right he dealt specially with the criticism of Colonel Winston Churchill. "To this," he said, "I reply in the spirit in which it is made; Colonel Churchill's criticism is entirely of a constructive, and not of a destructive, order." Colonel Churchill's special charge was that only one-half of the Army in France and Flanders was actually fighting, a modified version of the theory that it takes two men to get one man into a trench. Kitchener, in his turn, moved with ease among his facts and figures.¹ He declined utterly to interfere with the Commander-in-Chief as to disposition and allocation of troops in the field, but he could demonstrate without fear of contradiction that there was no waste, or undue dissipation of man-power; to his avowed satisfaction his old friend was one to join in an unanimous vote of thanks for a straightforward and explicit statement, to express recognition of what the War Secretary had done, and admiration for the way he had done it.

The two men would meet no more; within a few days a faithful steward was suddenly

¹ The War Secretary was emphatic that Colonel Churchill's criticisms were all entirely of a constructive character.

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called to give an account of his stewardship before the final Court of Enquiry; his colleague, in God's good mercy, has been spared to serve his country in divers ways, but always with heart as well as brain, and finally to be supreme in active defence of perhaps the greatest cause history and humanity have ever known.

At the end of the year, by a rather strange, and not very edifying struggle, Mr. Asquith ceased to be Prime Minister and Mr. Lloyd George moved across from the War Office to take his place. The new Prime Minister would have liked to post at once Winston to the Ministry of Munitions, but this was a little difficult, partly because the sometime First Lord was about to be examined before the Dardanelles Commission, but chiefly because Lord Northcliffe was fantastically opposed to him.

The proprietor of *The Times* eventually ceased to cavil and Winston then took up his new job to make of it a complete success. Here he had full scope for his abilities, his imagination had full play; his very self-will was an asset and for the time he willed above all else the Tanks. Three months before he left his Admiralty a conference was

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held in his bedroom—he was always very late to bed and rather late to rise—and there was agreed, as a sequel to many conclaves of experts, that a “land ship” to be of service must be capable of climbing a parapet four and a half feet high and crossing a trench five and a half feet wide; it must be able to traverse sticky ground and break through barbed wire entanglements. The First Lord, off his own bat, and not worrying about the money, gave an order for a considerable consignment of these, an order which was coolly torn up by Mr. Balfour; the new First Lord, however, allowed one to be constructed and to be given a trial by permission of his cousin, Lord Salisbury, at Hatfield.¹

There followed the serious recognition of what Douglas Haig modestly described as “a new type of heavy armoured car.” The more imaginative journalist wrote of “huge shapeless brutes resembling nothing else on earth which wandered about like some antediluvian

¹ Kitchener was present and, to his dismay, found a group of spectators all agog to witness a very hush-hush display; he watched for a little while and then walked back to his car. Said the C.I.G.S. to him: “You evidently don’t think much of this new creature.” “On the contrary,” was the reply, “I think so much of it that I am going to put in a large order to-night and arrange for secret construction. But had I appeared greatly impressed before all that crowd the story of a successful invention would have been on everyone’s lips and the Germans would have got wind of it. Now I hope people will say that the War Office has turned it down.”

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creature formed and forgotten by nature."¹ The Tanks made their first appearance at the battle of Thiepval in mid-September, 1916; they were not put to their full test until the battle of Cambrai twelve months later, by which time Churchill was installed as Minister of Munitions and, under his vigorous directions, "Big Willie" was exploited without any further check.

Winston Churchill may have wielded larger powers at the Admiralty, further grave duties were in store for him leading up to approximately the highest post a British subject can occupy; but it is possible to think he was never more entirely "suited" than when he found himself at the Munitions; he could go backwards and forwards, generally by air, between the Chateau allotted to him in France and his office in London; he could confer and advise whether in the front line, at G.H.Q., or in Downing Street, and he could apparently act almost anywhere; he could see to it that mechanical power should be stretched to its fullest capabilities for offence on land and, with no trace

¹ Another journalist was moved to glowing periods. "At Cambrai the tanks opened the attack and the attack was a stupendous success; as the tanks moved forward with the Infantry close behind the enemy completely lost his balance and those who did not fly panic-stricken from the field surrendered with little or no resistance; on the 20th November one of the most astonishing battles in all history was won."

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of jealousy or soreness, urge that the navy should bear her full and most honourable part in the World War.

Then he was deeply concerned with the tardy entrance of America into the field of fire, with the subsequent delay which occurred before she fired, and with the reluctance of her Generals to be taught the lessons we ourselves had so hardly learned. He must have highly approved the French lady driver who, on being reproached by General Pershing for "*dix minutes de retard*" retorted: "*Et vous, mon Général, 18 mois. Montez vite.*" For Winston Churchill there was, of course, the call of the American as well as of the English blood, and every scrap of value his American blood brought him was put into the common stock.

When the great German assault had been finally checked and Foch had delivered his July counter stroke, the Minister of Munitions would be told that the sages in Downing Street were confident that the war would end in the summer of 1919 and in that year the horse would vanish altogether and tanks would be the all-in-all. With this in view he strained a body which seemed impervious to fatigue, a mind which nothing could cloud, and nerves which refused to snap. Once more he would be

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ready and, as he felt confident, ready to give a *coup de grâce*.

Then the unexpected happened. Late in August Douglas Haig was debating the momentous question of assaulting the Hindenburg Works. "If only they would believe how loyal I am to Foch and how easy it is to be loyal to him," was one of his remarks to be committed to the writer's memory. While the Commander in-Chief was burning to act and thereby to save blood and treasure there came a cold letter from the War Cabinet—to which Winston Churchill was certainly not privy—as to his not incurring heavy risk; his blunt answer was to proceed to London and tell the Cabinet that, in his deliberate opinion, finality might be found before the autumn suns should set. His would be the responsibility, his the blame if things went wrong; the Cabinet might take the credit if things went right.

With the last days of September the famous Line was broken; then master-stroke was to follow master-stroke in quick succession until, on the 11th November, the "Cease Fire" sounded and an exhausted world could rest on its arms.

To no man more than to Winston Churchill must the Armistice have seemed more of an aftermath. Soldier, journalist, politician—or

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adventurer if you will—he was the man of action, the fighter.

It is possible that of all labels that of politician suits him least: that for him as for few of this century, the dignity of the rank of "statesman" should be revived. Conservative, Unionist, Free Trader, Liberal, Coalition, Liberal, Liberal Free Trader, Anti-Socialist, Constitutional, Conservative—no man has so laid himself open to the charge of being a turn-coat. Yet, as his life theme has developed, his real consistency of purpose is revealed. He is the great Briton, and thereby only can he be explained.

With all Britons he permitted himself his brief exhilarating triumph. He writes of the Nation but speaks surely for himself as part of it. "The pageant of victory unrolled itself before the eyes of the British nation. All the Emperors and Kings with whom we had warred had been dethroned, their valiant armies shattered to pieces. . . . The whole land made holiday. Triple lines of captured cannon lined the Mall. The vast crowds were convulsed with emotions beyond expression; and in Trafalgar Square the joy of the London revellers left enduring marks on the plinth of Nelson's Column." Which was all very right and proper, but: "These hours were brief; they

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passed as suddenly as they had begun. Too much blood had been spilt. Too much life-essence had been consumed. The gaps in every home were too wide and empty.”¹

In the years immediately following the War it was Britain and her Empire that he stood for, even if, with a compensating regard for facts, he sometimes lent himself to crusades that superficially sold the pass. He was not concerned with the size of the Empire but for its true security. Of the many criticisms his enemies of the country can level, Churchill’s name can hardly be coupled with Versailles. The peace treaties concerned him little.

Germany of to-day might—but will not—remember that. Nor should she overlook that he was almost if not quite the first to fight for the lifting of the blockade for the relief of starving Germany. It is to be doubted that matters were by any means so black as they were painted. His was the loudest voice demanding the sending of food ships to Hamburg. He gave no support to the “Hang the Kaiser” cry. His counsel was the steadiest in the matter of reparations. If he even so spoke as the patriot he spoke also as the soldier prepared to stretch a hand to the conquered foe. That he abandoned some of his pleas was perhaps the

¹ *The World Crisis—The Aftermath.*

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act of a politician at election time, but it saved his talents for the country which showed itself none too well provided with such.

He combined, in the new Coalition, the departments of War and Air, the latter because Mr. Lloyd George declared his intention of abolishing it as a separate Ministry. He was faced with the immediate duties of demobilisation and of raising anew the Regular Army. He had also to evolve, now as War Minister and later as Colonial Minister, garrisons and governments for Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Palestine.

Demobilisation as a system had of necessity been worked out long before he entered the War Office. Actually the draft had first been prepared, with a degree of optimism wholly praiseworthy, in 1917. Evolved mainly in accordance with civilian opinion, it was approached entirely from the angle of the necessity for re-starting industry. That Sir Douglas Haig denounced it as "most objectionable and prejudicial to discipline" carried no weight at all. He was only the Commander-in-Chief of the B.E.F.

"Key-men" of industry were picked out by scores of thousands to be first released. But by the very fact of their being key-men they were

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in the main the very last to have been sent overseas. The word "conscript" was still a term of derision among British soldiers. Regulars, Territorials and Kitchener men alike prided themselves on the fact that they had not "waited until they were dragged out." They had fought very willingly for microscopic pay, and now considered they should have their reward.

The result was to be foreseen. There were mutinies and rumours of mutinies: furious discontent and the shedding of discipline. Where battalion staffs could have brought their establishments home in fitting and joyous triumph, scratch bands of demobilising subalterns were swept aboard trains and boats by the insubordinate mobs they were supposed to "conduct."

Even so it was mainly in the departmental corps, where discipline had been of a different order, that trouble arose. In many instances regimental officers were able to hold their men. It was an object lesson, if a sharp one, of that power of "regiment" and "tradition" that few purely staff soldiers and no civilian ever seem to appreciate.

The new Minister, taking up the reins when the team had bolted, saved a complete crash. Ardently supported by Sir Douglas Haig as a

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soldier, and by the Cabinet as a set of badly scared politicians, he tore the scheme to pieces. Sixty-nine "Young Soldiers" battalions were organised for immediate service on the Rhine. Old soldiers and those with wound stripes jumped to the top of the roll. Indiscipline placed a man as surely at the bottom. Monetary recompense was offered to those whose delay to civil life was delayed. For nearly six months men were demobilised smoothly at the rate of 10,000 a day. He was able to write: "Crimes of violence actually diminished and prisons had to be closed and sold, when four million trained and successful killers, or nearly one-third of the whole manhood of the nation, resumed their civic status." How near a "soldiers' revolution" we were in those days, only the soldiers themselves knew—and Winston Churchill.

His Near East experiments were in happier mould, though they inevitably came in for sharp criticism. Thus early he foresaw the importance of Palestine from the military viewpoint, and garrisoned it strongly. In Iraq he substituted the Air Force for the Army and for the first time demonstrated that the new arm had a peace-time potentiality of immense economic importance.

His action in bolstering up the failing White

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forces in Russia laid him open to the old charges of adventuring. Expeditions to the White Sea sounded as thoroughly Churchillian as Sydney Street, Antwerp or the Dardanelles.

Yet he was not so much the arch anti-Bolshevist as the staunch believer in Britain, a Britain founded upon a system old, well-proved, but no longer so stable as when it erected the Empire. This Britain and this system must be preserved at all costs.

“It is easy,” he declared in 1923, “to denounce or deride the capitalist system, and to point to its many imperfections and inequalities. But the capitalist system, armed with science, has enabled us to organise and develop our industries in such a manner that at least twenty million people have been brought into existence in this island, more than the island could feed or keep alive even at the lowest level. . . . Without our credit, without our world-wide trade connections, without our free and unhampered individual enterprise, it would not be possible to keep alive and buy food for at least one-half of our British people. Derange this system, damage this intricate process, rupture it, shatter it, injure it even, and there are no limits to the catastrophe into which we shall be plunged. . . . And if through faction, through superficial qualities,

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through levity, through lack of continuous purpose, we were to let the nation drift into a great failure, a cruel stultification, leading them to feel that all their efforts were a mistake and that all they had fought for had turned to ashes, we should break the best, the truest hearts that beat for Britain.” Such were his considered views. This was no election speech.

His transfer from the War Office to the Colonial Office left him still with the cares of Palestine and Mesopotamia and plunged him deep into the troubled Balkans into the bargain. Tangled as affairs always are in this part of the atlas, they had never before been upset by quite so trivial an affair as the bite of a monkey.

Yet it was a monkey’s bite that killed King Alexander of Greece, recalled “Tino”, turned Venizelos from office and brought the Turks from the ebb of defeat back on the flood to Constantinople.

The Greek Army of 1920, again in accordance with Balkan tradition, changed its officers with its Government. Under Venizelist command it had at the request of the Supreme War Council done a smart job of work in Thrace and Anatolia. Under the returned Constantine, *non persona grata* to the victorious

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powers, the same army found itself faced with an *Anabasis* lacking a *Xenophon*.

Europe shrugged its shoulders. Balkan wars, at one time good invigorating diet for journalists, had become extremely small beer. Europe was, in addition, lazy, hard-up and desperately tired. The Turks waited grimly.

Mr. Lloyd George, of course, may have remembered Mr. Gladstone as the arch advocate for Greece; he was anyhow definitely interested. This was a dreamer's campaign. The Isles of Greece might provide good fishing. This should be the Final Crusade. The Christian Greeks should push the Paynim finally back to his barren fastness.

Mr. Churchill, painfully aware of Gallipoli, was no less interested, but far clearer in the eye. Whatever his romanticism, he was, now as ever, soldier and Englishman. He saw all too clearly the inevitability of Greek defeat, especially with the French hard at work arming the Turks. Moreover, writing "Moslem" for "Paynim" he saw the danger to ourselves as the greatest Moslem Power, aligning ourselves against a Turkey who was no longer the ally of Germany.

The Greek Army was truly doomed, though it was not until August, 1922, that Kemal Pasha, leader of a rejuvenated Turkey, dealt

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his blow. When it came it was decisive. The Greeks, already paralysed by lack of supplies, were routed at Afrim-Karchissa, lost 50,000 prisoners and took to their boats. "Chanak," to quote one writer, "rose upon the international horizon."

Churchill was right, but knew that the time was now come to think in terms of Europe rather than Empire. The French and Italians had disappeared, leaving a thousand British soldiers to hold Constantinople and rather more at Chanak, on the other side of the water. If the Turk was to arrive once more at his capital it must not be over their bodies.

Mr. Lloyd George, well and truly scared, was, with Churchill himself and Lord Birkenhead, at the head of a failing Government in London. Its great majority was of fictitious value. Even Lord Beaverbrook opposed Churchill when he saw that the new war to which the latter seemed about to commit himself looming before a country utterly weary.

The Dominions were appealed to, and rose nobly once again, although the handling of the message to their Governments was bungled. General Harington at Constantinople was interpreting in somewhat more smooth tones the brisk orders emanating from the Colonial Office. Troops and warships rushed East.

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In the face of the almost united opposition of all parties, Churchill charged gamely on his way until the Cabinet authorised the presentation of an ultimatum to Kemal. It was never presented, but firm handling played its part in giving the Turk pause, and paved the way for a new Treaty of Sèvres. A Constantinople reformed by Treaty was much to be preferred to a British defeat, and its reform had indeed been inevitable. But the Country had had enough. The Coalition was expelled.

There is little space, and perhaps less point, in telling again, even from the Churchillian angle, the troubled story of Ireland, and the setting up of the Free State. Here he was once more the patriot, but tempered his patriotism once more with realism. Earlier than most he foresaw the necessity for facing the fact that Ulster, if it was to remain within the fold, could not hold the South with it. Michael Collins's last message to him was: "Tell Winston we could never have done without him."

Chanak, that inconsiderable village of Asia Minor, kept the ex-Colonial Minister two years from Parliament. During these two years he prepared himself for return to complete Conservatism.

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Increasingly out of touch with Liberalism and its leaders himself, he must have realised that the creed was itself out of touch with the realities of modern Britain. It was, in fact, no creed for the Empire. Perhaps it had never been.

Thrice defeated at the hustings, the last of the three was something of a moral victory. He came out, not indeed as a fully-fledged Tory, but as an "Anti-Socialist", opposing the official Conservative in the almost sacred Abbey Division of Westminster. His defeat by a mere forty-three votes set the doors of the Carlton Club swinging in the most violent fashion. So when the Tories came back on the flood of the Zinovieff Letter Election, Churchill came back with them for the safe seat of Epping. For the life of this Parliament only he was neatly labelled a "Constitutionalist".

He was, nevertheless, to accept from Mr. Baldwin the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Delighted as he was to attain the penultimate step in the Cabinet ladder, it is to be doubted that he was ever at ease on this most perilous perch. Nevertheless, the nation stood by with zestful attention to watch his financial acrobatics.

And acrobatic his five budgets were indeed, though, dependent upon circumstances mainly

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out of control, that could hardly be described as successful. Being Churchillian, they were all, as a matter of course, subject for fierce debate. They included a return to the Gold Standard, and an optimistic promise to reduce expenditure by ten million in each successive year. Although a slight reduction of Income Tax brought a sigh of relief at the first, the pledge for cumulative reduction was never to be redeemed.

Among the worst of the Chancellor's enemies were the General Strike and the pernicious bribing of the coal trade. The fight was gallant, as all Churchill's battles must be, but it is highly probable that if there was any consolation for the Party's defeat at the next election it was derived from the thought that "What shall we do with Churchill?" was a question that only need be answered in the sterile game of "Shadow Cabinets".

The high-light of his Chancellorship had, however, nothing to do with the Exchequer. The iniquitous General Strike of May, 1926, followed hard upon the introduction of his second budget. The starting gun was touched off in Fleet Street, where the action of one staff of printers in refusing to set up a certain leading article was followed by the almost complete extinction of the Press.

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Then it was remembered that the Cabinet numbered among its members just one professional journalist—Winston Churchill. The Sudan and South African correspondent of the *Morning Post* dashed gleefully enough from Whitehall to Fleet Street as Editor of his old newspaper, printed by amateur talent, slightly camouflaged as the *British Gazette*.

It was a sensational piece of work. Starting from scratch, the *British Gazette*, in the eight days of its life, attained a circulation of 2,250,000, and was thus limited only by the capacity of its presses. To his severest critic—from the Labour side—Churchill replied blandly: “If ever you let loose another General Strike on us, we will let loose on you another *British Gazette*.¹”

The wilderness waited. Britain’s most brilliant statesman—too brilliant, perhaps, for a prosaic House of Commons—left office when the Government fell. Even though the Party came back, he was not to be recalled until the nation remembered him in its need. But he was always “news”. Whether he took up a paint brush, published another book, or joined the Amalgamated Union of Building Trades Workers, the country was delighted to be told.

In the House he sharpened his sword, and

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was ever ready to dart it flashing from his back bench, and if the sword must rest for a while in its scabbard, the pen would do perhaps its worthiest, certainly its most enduring work.

The *River War*, the *Malakand Campaign*, *Lord Randolph Churchill*—which ranks with Boswell's *Johnson* and Morley's *Gladstone*—even the World Crisis, may in the flux of years lose some of their interest though nothing of their literary merits; but *Marlborough* will stand for all time and be leisurely chewed or greedily devoured by all readers according to the keenness of their appetites.

Mr. Churchill's first task here was to clear and clean all the ground on which the memory of the great Duke rests; the note of controversy had, therefore, to be struck and to resound, but never to be discordant; Winston's brief for his ancestor is the more powerful because it is so good-tempered; it is at once a passionate and a dispassionate treatise. The reader of these splendid volumes has the feeling that Macaulay, Thackeray, Swift, and other detractors of the Duke have been hitting out rather wildly, that Lord Wolseley's blows in defence necessarily fell short from lack of time and breath, and that it remained for Winston to deliver the knock-out blow to sour critics and to assign to a great

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soldier his rightful place in the gallery of Englishmen who have spent their lives, and themselves, in the service of their country and to whom full justice has not been done until long after they have passed away.

The Duke of Marlborough is emphatically one of the works which the casual reader may find a little difficult to take up, which the careful reader will find impossible to put down. And the work is so essentially fair; Mr. Churchill employs the happy and most convincing method of marshalling his famous figures and stating his historic facts and then leaving it to his readers to form their own judgments, although that judgment is likely to be precisely what he intended. Glowing admiration does not blind to faults, indiscretions are not blinked, grievances—genuine grievances—are recorded rather than resented, and there emerges a portrait which is immeasurably great.

A biography such as this, of course, deals largely with campaigns, battles and marches, of how soldiers fought and bled and suffered and died, but the lay reader does not find himself either bewildered, baffled or bored. "I like Prescott's *Philip the Second*, all except the battles; I never can see where the left wing rests." So wrote Lady Wolseley in one of her famous

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letters to her husband. Winston makes it clear, and attractive, to the most unmilitary reader as to the exact position, and the why and wherefore of it, of all the wings.

A little startling at first sight is the statement that Queen Anne was one of the strongest personalities that has ruled England. "Dead as Queen Anne" is no longer an appropriate simile; the last of the Stuart rulers is brought to life under our eyes almost like Galatea with the chisel of Pygmalion; ungainly and awkward and gouty Anne must remain but with Mr. Churchill's art and accuracy the daughter of James II takes her place beside the daughters of Henry Tudor and Edward of Hanover. Again and again useful parallels are drawn and not dragged in. In 1702 as in 1914, there were many to protest against sending more than a meagre supply of troops abroad; we must look, it was then argued, to the navy for support and try and find our way through some back door. Others were equally sure that a death blow at the heart of France was what ought to be dealt and that after victory in the decisive theatre all would be well. The strategic result of Bavaria joining France and Spain, then the Central Powers, is cleverly compared with the sequel of Turkey putting her dusky hand into the iron fist of Germany.

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It was said by a man of letters that most soldiers are clear and explicit on paper but hopeless when on their legs as speakers. It will at no time be easy to say whether as author or orator Winston has climbed to the highest peak; *Marlborough* will stand as an abiding witness that as a biographer he has few peers and no superiors.

A long period of intense and disciplined training, four years of war strain accentuated by circumstances for which destiny was responsible, seventeen years absorbed in a task greatly self-imposed which rendered an Heir Apparent a familiar figure from North to South and from East to West; a life in which year in year out he loomed delightfully in the public eye and with every appearance compelled the almost frantic plaudits of the public; his ardent desire was to be of "help"; he would go to the very root of prevailing difficulties; he would trace to their source evils such as crowding, unemployment, languishing trade and, perhaps more especially, the hardships of men who in four years of bitter strife stood between England and disaster.

There are not a few to suggest that the Duke of Windsor represents a reincarnation of the House of Stuart, whose trickle of blood in her

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veins Queen Victoria so proudly claimed. Anyhow, through all the shouting and the triumphs, there lurked the shadow of a tragedy, a tragedy in which a Sovereign, still in his early summer, would play a brief but by no means colourless part, and then, with a gesture which had no little grace, would withdraw indefinitely from public view.

This was the Prince to whose side Winston Churchill, *talis ab incepto*, hurried when those who had flattered and fawned on him were looking askance and were babbling of betrayal of duty. "We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality."¹ The fit of morality here was far from ridiculous; it was wholly reasonable, but it was rather ruthless.

To quote Dr. Liddon again. How far the Court and entourage of Edward VIII was composed of really good men and women it would be impossible to say; of their—at times almost frenzied—applause there was no doubt; of their present hostility there was even less. For Winston it was exactly the reverse. He was twenty years older than the Monarch and if the Royal Family and the House of Churchill had been bound by ties of friendship the lives of these two had only touched, and touched

¹ *Essay on Byron.*

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lightly, at infrequent points. But here was a Prince, a veritable Prince Charming, but now torn between cruelly conflicting emotions and in sore need of someone ripe in experience and rich in sympathy to help him. All—and there is so much—that was chivalrous in Churchill's nature asserted itself; to be the under dog—if it were not disrespectful to use the term—was always sufficient to enlist his championship and his succour; the lost cause of the Stuarts had again and again been his close study; so perhaps with all the more ardour he would fight a losing battle for a King who reproduced in every act and deed—and apparently in every thought—all that was good and all that was most unhappy in the Stuart dynasty.

Of course, it was a losing battle, and Winston must have known it from the first, though he would not admit failure until the farewell note sounded from the Augusta Tower at Windsor and a King, now only a King in History, had vanished in the darkness of a December night; the once idol of the public in his hour of dire distress had only found one man of public fame to espouse his cause. Till the very last Winston Churchill pleaded for time—time to consider and consult, time to explore every constitutional point and see if there were not some way of reconciling public duty with personal

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affection, some way of preventing an abdication which the Prime Minister¹ admittedly engineered with cool calculation and no little Parliamentary skill. And if he must abdicate, was Winston's final plea, at least let a King be handed with something like dignity, and not hustled with haste, from a throne which in so many ways and for so many years he had loyally sought to serve.

But it was not to be. "God save the King," were the last words on the lips of Edward VIII, and to the new King the Prime Minister turned for his reward. The rewards were substantial. No praise was too high for the way in which a Constitutional crisis had been avoided; Mr. Baldwin was held up for adulation, while on the other hand, the fingers of scorn and contumely and reproach, were levelled at Mr. Churchill. Within four short years when the enemy began to batter at unfortified gates the two Statesmen would quickly and entirely change places in the public eye.

Parliamentary procedure in this country is too apt to lag lamely behind the march of the nation's thought. Years earlier than was reflected in Westminster Britain as a whole saw quite clearly its inevitable opponent in Hitler's Germany. Even Munich brought but a sigh

¹ Right Hon. Stanley Baldwin, later Earl Baldwin, K.G.

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of temporary relief. On its morrow the nation, especially that part of it which would be called upon to fight, mingled its glee with the thought that the task was but deferred.

Certainly we needed time—desperately. But from that moment, if not far earlier, men began to think of Churchill's warnings, and to pay increasing heed to his further utterances. There were chinks in the armour, how grave the ordinary man could fortunately only suspect. The time was rapidly passing when we could laugh matters off with jokes about umbrellas.

What a shout of joy there was when Winston marched back into the Admiralty. How we wished he could be multiplied. And it seemed that naval affairs improved from the very moment of his assuming office. The "ordinary man" patted himself on the back and remarked that "he always knew." First Lord *par excellence*, Mr. Churchill also revealed himself as the Government's Number One Broadcaster. Lacking the "Oxford accent" he spoke as a Briton to Britons. "Monty Viddio" was just what the man in the pub called that South American port. The Churchillian "Narzi" sounded just as one imagined such an outsider should sound.

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For years, ever since and even before, Germany scornfully tore to shreds the Locarno Treaty and strode into forbidden territory one statesman had lifted up his voice and declared in clarion tones that our great enemy was rearming, re-arming rapidly and to the teeth, and that the national duty which stared us in the face was to do likewise. But, however persistent, however penetrating his voice, it was of no use; he was crying in the wilderness of Westminster and Whitehall and there was no answer; he was beating at the doors of Downing Street and no porter opened to him. One Prime Minister flatly refused to heed the warnings which his military advisers again and again offered him; his ear was given not to them but to the party agent who reminded him that if a Conservative victory were to be secured at the polls he must walk warily. His successor, honest in intent, but strangely misled, hesitated till it was too late to prepare in downright earnest for a mighty struggle; perhaps it seemed to him that a Great War was unthinkable and it was better not to think about it at all.

And at long last the public spoke in no uncertain voice, and with steady finger pointed to the one man who might ward off the disaster which seemed daily to be drawing nearer and

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hourly to be assuming a more and more deadly shape. Of Georges Cleménceau it was said that if France prospered he might do something to spoil things; if France were in agony "The Tiger" might be the one person to save her. Winston Churchill may at times have been a little "difficult" when his country was largely prospering; when his country was in perplexity and peril to Winston Churchill his countrymen turned with one accord for guidance and supreme control. His defects, if there were any in his public life, were forgotten; there remained the almost unrivalled power of inspiring masses of men with confidence; even when the sternest words of warning fall from his lips there remained the eloquence which delights the ear and stirs the blood, the imagination to devise plans, the amazing industry to put them into effect; all the high gifts which would bring all classes in this giant Empire to give him their unreserved trust.

To know the British people is to know how difficult it is to win this sort of trust, but once conceded—as we have just now seen it—no human agency can ever withdraw it.

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